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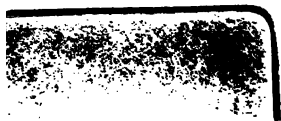
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DURING LENT 1843.



BY THE
REV. ALEXANDER WATSON, M.A.
CURATE OF THE CHURCH.

LONDON:
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PORTMAN SQUARE.
W. B. HILL, & H. DAVIES, CHELTENHAM.

MDCCCXLIII.

TO THE
RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD
JAMES HENRY
(BY DIVINE PERMISSION),
LORD BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL,
IN DUTIFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF
MANY ACTS OF
PERSONAL KINDNESS AND EPISCOPAL DIRECTION,
THESE LECTURES
ARE INSCRIBED BY HIS LORDSHIP'S
OBLIGED AND FAITHFUL SERVANT IN CHRIST,
THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE object which the Author had in view in the delivery of these Lectures, was the settlement of his congregation in those principles which are embodied in the Book of Common Prayer, and which, being so embodied, may be looked upon as supplying English Christians with an answer to the inquiry, "How can I hear the Church?" And the Author also proposed to himself to attempt, through their instrumentality, the attainment of a more uniform reverence in the celebration of Divine Service. Having reason to believe that both these objects have been pro-

moted by the delivery of the Lectures, he now commits them to the press, in the hope that they may answer the same ends to a still greater extent, and more effectually than they have hitherto done.

The Author advances no pretensions to novelty in these pages. His simple desire has been, to show to the members of our communion their duty to the Church of England as She is; and in following out this desire, he has confined himself to the recognized orders of that branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church. He is more and more convinced, by the events of each day, that if our present unhappy divisions are to cease, unity under God depends upon nothing so much as a scrupulous observance, to the best of our power, of the matters to which we are committed by the Book of Common Prayer, and the Canons and Constitutions Ecclesiastical. There must be more conformity, and less of every man doing that

which is right in his own eyes ; and if these Lectures shall strengthen any of his brethren in Christ, whether clergy or laity, in following the Prayer Book as a safe guide in the interpretation of Scripture, the Author will be abundantly thankful.

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LECTURE I.

THE DUTY OF STRENGTHENING THE THINGS WHICH REMAIN.

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“Be ye watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before GOD. Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent.”

SUCH were some of the words which the beloved disciple was directed to write unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis, and from them we may derive much useful instruction, and some consolation; though, indeed, it is shadowed with sorrow for that weakness of our fallen nature, which remains even in them that be regenerated.*

* Article ix.

And first, of the nature of the consolation to be hence derived, we may observe that the fact of any particular branch of the Church, in the present age, being unmindful of its privileges, is no sufficient proof of the absence of a Divine origin; nor of the presence of such heretical pravity as should place it wholly and at once beyond the reach of the Divine solicitude. If, within a few years of the death of the FOUNDER of the religion, and while yet there remained upon the earth one of the first members of the Apostolic College, so general a defection from the practice, and even from the faith, required from the disciples of the cross, could take place, as that to which we have witness in the messages to the seven Churches of Asia: if, in the very first century of the Gospel era, there were those who had "a name to live, but were dead:"* we need hardly wonder that, after the lapse of eighteen hundred years, the eye which follows to its source the stream of evangelic truth, should find it often running in muddy channels; and carrying on its bosom impurity and filth, instead of reflecting, in brightness and

* Verse 1.

in beauty, the peaceful impress, of the holy and undivided TRINITY, and of the blessings flowing from the Incarnation of the Eternal WORD.

“It must needs be that offences come,”* was the prophetic declaration of our Divine MASTER; and most sadly have events verified the unerring sentence. Heresies and schisms have disfigured the beauty of CHRIST’S seamless robe:† and laxity of conduct has proved that though Paul may plant and Apollos water, it is GOD, and HE alone, that can give the increase.‡ But meanwhile, CHRIST’S promise, which was sure, because it was HIS, has been kept; and with HIS two or three faithful ones HE has ever been to bless:§ neither has HE, nor will HE at any time, wholly withdraw HIS true Presence from HIS collective Church.|| His Church has undying powers of succession, and so long as the world endures, it will continue to be GOD’S family of election from that world’s snares.¶ But the integrity and durability of the vine is quite compatible with the lopping off of its decayed branches; and thus it is that,

* Matthew xviii. 7.

† John xix. 23.

‡ 1 Corinthians iii. 6.

§ Matthew xviii. 20.

|| Matthew xxviii. 20.

¶ Acts ii. 47; Eph. iii. 9-12

while the light from the Urim and Thummim on the breast of our Great High-priest will ever stream through the world, there is not any special guarantee that a particular candlestick shall not be removed out of its place.* A true branch of the Church may decline from its original purity, and may ultimately become so corrupt in doctrine or in practice, that although, by the preservation of its external ordinances, it continues truly a Church, it ceases to be a true exponent of the Gospel of CHRIST:† but this apostasy is never sudden and abrupt. There is first a falling off by degrees from the first love:‡ a gradual torpor enchains the vital energies; and it is not until after repeated warnings from GOD's messengers, that HIS favour is finally withdrawn. There remain almost to the last "a few names which have not defiled their garments;"§ and they form the gracious witness of our Heavenly FATHER, that it is not HIS pleasure that any should perish,|| but that all should, not only come to the knowledge of the truth,¶ but "that they

* Revelation ii. 5.

† "Verè ecclesia non vera ecclesia."—Dean Field.

‡ Revelation ii. 4.

§ Revelation iii. 4.

|| 2 Peter iii. 9.

¶ 2 Timothy iii. 7.

should grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.* But, if the witness is unheeded, then the day of righteous vengeance will come; and GOD's favour once wholly withdrawn, ruin and desolation are sure to take its place.

Sardis, once the renowned capital of Croesus and the rich Lydian kings, is now no longer worthy of the name of a city; being nothing more than an ignoble village, with low and wretched cottages; yet the great extent and grandeur of the ruins abundantly show how large and beautiful a city it was formerly. The Turks have only one mosque here, perverted to that use from being a Christian church. But very few Christians are here to be found, and these sustain a miserable servitude, being without a church or priest. Such is the state of this once glorious city: but this was because she listened not to the voice of warning, as conveyed in the text; because upon trial her works were not found perfect; and, together with the other churches of Asia, she stands forth to give us the warning assurance that neglect of the Gospel

* 2 Peter iii. 18.

is followed by its removal. It does not appear that Sardis was to be blamed for heresy, or that it was charged with corruption of doctrine: it was negligence for which she was reproved: it was because she was supine that she was warned. Her's was not the misfortune of ignorance, nor the guilt of wilful opposition to the truth; but her sin was this: she knew her LORD'S will, and did it not.* She is therefore exhorted to watchfulness and the strengthening of what remains; to the recollection of her privileges, and to a vigorous retention of them; together with repentance for the errors of the past. It is not, as I have said, at once that the blow of Divine vengeance falls; it is not at once that GOD ceases to strive with man. When a Church has become unmindful of her high duties, and fails to perform the high behests with which she is commissioned, then comes the voice of gracious warning; and it is accompanied with the even more gracious promise,—“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of Life; but I will confess his name before MY

* Luke xii. 47.

FATHER and before HIS angels.”* The danger is, lest this warning shall receive no attention, or lest the few by whom it is heeded, should be overpowered by the opiate of negligence and the remonstrance of covert infidelity.

CHRIST is the one great MEDIATOR between GOD and man,† and the Church is HIS body in action; and when the energies of the Church are impeded by a sluggish circulation of the life blood: when the voice of the Church is still: then the evil is unchecked: the storm of sin rages, and there is no voice proclaiming, “Peace, be still.”‡ Then the Evil One is curtaining the boundaries of our habitation with the darkness of his sable wings, and there is no fiat commanding that there be light: then men are wandering out of the way, and the candle, instead of beaming as a beacon light on the hill top, is hid under a bushel.§ No greater misfortune can happen to a land than the inactivity of her Church, for “If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!”||

Hence it is that there is not the Church which

* Revelation iii. 5.

† 1 Timothy ii. 5.

‡ Mark iv. 39.

§ Matthew v. 14-15.

|| Matthew vi. 23.

will not do well to have ever in mind this admonition to the Church of Sardis ; for, of no branch of the Church can it be said that “ their works are found perfect before GOD.”

When we look back upon the history of our own Church, how much is there to humble us in the dust, as we contemplate GOD’S goodness and our unthankfulness for HIS unspeakable mercy to our nation ! In the times when this country was partly held by colonies of the Romans, and partly still under its old inhabitants, the Britons, our forefathers, like all other ancient heathens, were idolaters, and it would appear that a Christian Church was planted here in the time of the Apostles : and, as it would seem, at the date of St. Paul’s travels to the west, A.D. 63 ; thus supporting the opinion founded upon the report of the early Church historians, that, after his first imprisonment at Rome, he fulfilled his intention of preaching the Gospel in Spain, and went to the “ utmost bounds of the west ” and the “ islands of the ocean ; ” for, from this it has been supposed that he was either himself in Britain, or that he sent some of the companions of his travels to make known on these shores the Name of CHRIST. The Church, how-

ever, was not planted here without persecution, and foremost among "the noble army of martyrs," were Aaron and Julius, two citizens of Caerleon, and Alban, an officer in the Roman troops, who resided at the Roman town of Verulam, near the site of the town which has since been called St. Alban's after his name. Gildas, the earliest British historian, tells us that, about A.D. 303, the Christian churches throughout the world were levelled with the ground; all the copies of the Scriptures which could be anywhere found, were burnt in the public streets, and the priests and Bishops of the LORD's flock slaughtered with their charge; so that, in some provinces, not even a trace of Christianity remained. In the time, however, of the Emperor Constantine, whose reign shortly followed, the Christians in Britain were in the peaceful enjoyment of their churches, and religion flourished. Constantine himself, being a native of this island, seems to have honoured the British bishops, by sending for them to attend at councils, held by his authority at different places, for the settling of order and promoting the true religion. There were bishops from Britain, whose names are recorded, at the Council of

Arles, in France, A.D. 314: they seem also to have been at Nice or Nicæa in Asia, at the great council held there A.D. 325, where the creed, since called the Nicene Creed, was received, as the historians tell us, "with the unanimous consent of the Churches of Italy, Africa, Egypt, Spain, France, and Britain, and in the Asiatic dioceses."

It would be beyond our present purpose to follow in detail the history of the Church, subsequently to this period, through the persecutions it suffered during the invasion of hostile powers. When, A.D. 449, the Picts and Scots again returned, and the sad and suffering people of South Britain, with Vortigern their prince, resolved to invite the Saxons, then Christianity began to disappear; and it was to irradiate the gloom which followed upon this, that Augustine, a Roman monk, at the head of forty missionaries, was sent by Gregory the Great to our shores, which he reached in the month of August A.D. 596.* The Church, thus replanted

* Those who wish to follow this subject out, will find the Rev. Edwd. Churton's "Early English Church" (Burn's Englishman's Library), a valuable manual: and the subject is receiving a most patient and learned investigation at

among us, maintained for many years its provincial independence; but, ultimately, it bowed its neck to the yoke, and gradually received the corruptions of the papacy. But though the fine gold was again become dim,* and although the King's daughter† was now arrayed in meretricious dress, still GOD did not desert us; but once again poured in of HIS heavenly light to dispel the thick darkness; HE was graciously pleased to put it into the hearts of our chief rulers to protest against the usurpation of a foreign see; and to recover, from their long banishment, the pure Word of GOD, and the free circulation of its blessed doctrines. At the Reformation, the succession of our priesthood from the Apostles was maintained; the Sacraments which CHRIST ordained were restored to their rightful place, as chief means of grace, and their nature rescued from the mis-statement and darkening of words without knowledge, with which they had been covered in the times when

the hands of the Rev. J. Williams, in his "Cymry." "The Ecclesiastical Antiquities of the Cymry, or the Ancient British Church,—its History, Doctrine, and Rites." W. J. Cleaver, Baker Street.

* Lamentations iv. 1.

† Psalm xlv. 14. (Prayer Book version.)

the voice of a particular Church, at a particular period, was substituted for the consentient testimony of the wise and good in all time. Then, too, was the privilege of public prayer, in a tongue understood of the people, restored to the members of our Church, and the modern additions which had been made in an encroaching age, were swept away from the Prayer-book. The language of the primitive saints and confessors was restored, and, in the words of the Preface to the Prayer-book : “ It hath ever been the wisdom of the Church of England, ever since the first compiling of her Public Liturgy, to keep the mean between the two extremes, of too much stiffness in refusing, and too much easiness in admitting, any variation from it : ” and, in another part, we are told, “ Here you have an order for Prayer and for the reading of the Holy Scripture, much agreeable to the mind and purpose of the old Fathers.”

The principle upon which our reformers proceeded was, in fact, the well-known saying of Tertullian, that whatever in religion was old, was, by its very name, true ; while, whatever in religion was new, was, from the very nature of the case, false.

Christianity is a thing delivered once and for ever. Unlike science, its cardinal truths and first principles offer no field for discovery; and, would we be obedient to the Gospel of GOD's dear Son, we must neither add to, nor diminish from,* the faith once delivered to the saints.† The traditionary teaching of the Apostles, by which the Churches were built up in our most holy faith,‡ during the first century, before the New Testament was written and gathered into canon, has come down to us in the creeds; and, by continuing to us the three creeds of the universal Church, our Church has provided her members with a ready help to the understanding of holy Scripture. These formularies contain a summary of the Gospel in few words; words which, though they are not to be found for the most part in Scripture, yet most clearly enunciate the doctrines which Scripture contains. At the same period of which we are speaking, our Bishops continued to our Israel the observance of that law in GOD's kingdom, the DAILY SERVICE, and did not presume, as has been the case with merely Protestant communities, to

* Revelation xxii. 18-19. † Jude verse 3.

‡ Jude verse 20.

stint the children of their daily bread. They provided a course of Scripture reading which gives us Divine truth in that didactic order which most conduces to edification : and they also provided us with doctrinal statements in opposition to the perversions of Rome, the subtleties of the schoolmen, and the errors of the Anabaptists.

In short, they found themselves members of that which was truly a Church, though unfaithfully fulfilling the objects for which it had been constituted and established as a branch of the Universal Vine ; and, under these circumstances, awakened to a sense of their solemn duty to feed the flock of GOD which HE has purchased with HIS own Blood,* they set about the work of Reformation ; and, taking the primitive Church as their model, and the Word of GOD as the tribunal, beyond which there is no appeal, they cut off what was new ; and with some things, which, though not novelties, were not essential, as having been abused to superstition and sin, they thought it wise to dispense : and, while removing what was objectionable,

* Acts xx. 28.

they restored what was primitive and edifying, so far as they thought desirable in the times in which this Reformation was effected.

Once again our Church stood forth in the majesty and beauty of holiness and truth, a witness of the forbearance of our GOD, and of HIS love for this our nation ; once again was the rose of Sharon blooming in its loveliness, and men were invited to come and apply its leaves to the healing of their souls.* But, although the work of Reformation was Divine, the agents by whom it had to be accomplished were human ; and the ambition of a monarch lustful of power, and greedy for self, marred the honesty of the work in many of its details. This great work was accompanied with spoliation and sacrilege, and from such seeds it was not unnatural that tares should grow up with the wheat ; and so has it been. The elasticity of the Church, as the missionary organ in the evangelization of the world, has not been perceptible among us in the degree it ought ; and millions of our own people have been suffered to perish at home of famine, though surrounded

* Revelation xxii. 2.

by plenty. The vessel of the Church's fortunes has, since that period, been in danger; now from the Scylla of irreverence, and now from the Charybdis of superstition. She has been punished with undutiful children, and cursed with unfaithful watchmen; her pulse has at one time throbbed with a feverish excitement, at another, the circulation of life has been barely perceptible; now she has suffered from excess, now from defect: but, amid all her trials, she has ever had a few names which have not defiled their garments,* and, for the few righteous within her,† our Zion has been spared. Let us not, however, presume upon Divine mercy. God has, indeed, long been gracious unto us; but there is a limit even to His forbearance: let us fear to provoke the withdrawal of His grace. Of late the cry has been raised among us, "Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain;" and, God be thanked and praised, the cry has been heard, and in some good sort obeyed: many have remembered how they have received and heard, and the recollection has nerved them to hold fast, and prompted them to repent.

* Revelation iii. 4.

† Genesis xviii. 32.

When, brethren, we turn our eyes to the great names which glitter on the scroll of English Christianity, when we people the past with the mighty warriors of the Cross, who have received their enlistment into CHRIST'S service and soldiery through English Baptism ; and when we consider the might of intellect, the greatness of power, the abundance of wealth, and the generosity, which, if latent, still exists in the communion of the English Church : we are compelled to tremble lest we should be found to have failed to trade with the many talents* with which GOD has entrusted us. Our name is not only known, but feared throughout the world. Would that the ships which dot every sea, and sail before every wind, were always freighted with our choicest treasure, that pearl of great price† which the SON of GOD became incarnate to place within our reach, and which, unlike other treasures, makes him the richer who imparts most freely of it to others.‡

When we contemplate how much our Church might do were she but united, it is impossible

* Matthew xxv. 14-30.

† Matthew xiii. 45-46.

‡ Matthew x. 8 ; 1 Timothy vi. 17-19.

not to mourn that she should be torn by division and strife. Let but the Anglican Church put forth the united energy concentrated on the objects of its desire by the English nation, and soon should the glory of the LORD cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.*

Let it, then, be ours to remember the warning to the Church of Sardis, and be watchful : let it be ours to strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die : let us remember how we have received and heard, and let us hold fast and repent.

Be watchful and repent. For so doing, this holy season affords special opportunities, which I trust will be improved to your souls' health. The services of the day point significantly to your Lenten duties ; and some points of detail I have set before you in an address,† which will reach you to-day.

Strengthen the things which remain, rekindle the fading embers of devotion : throw a living earnestness into our beautiful services. Recognize and obey the Church's orders, omit not her

* Habakkuk ii. 14.

† Printed at the end of this volume.

observance of fast and festival, frequent her houses of public prayer, and rejoice when invited to go up into the house of the LORD.* Remember how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast. Ay, let memory perform her rightful office, and summon to your minds the lessons of early childhood, the fondness of a mother's teaching or of a kind instructor's training. Recollect how, ere yet your little minds could drink in their deep mysterious meaning, you were taught the high grace of Baptism, and the sainted sentences of the creed. Remember when first your lips lisped forth the prayer the LORD has taught us. Remember the opportunities of youth and manhood. Remember how thou hast received and heard. Remember that in the Church's keeping are the Holy Scriptures and the Creeds, the Holy Sacraments, and a heaven-born Liturgy, and that she holds them in trust for you. Remember how you have received and heard, and hold fast.

Ay, let us remember how long our prayers have been the standard forms of devotion in the Church of CHRIST, and we shall gain a fresh

* Psalm cxxii. 1.

reason for loving them, a fresh source of comfort in using them. I know that different persons will feel differently here, according to their different turn of mind ; but all must feel more or less inspired with devotional awe, as they contemplate that, in the Lord's Prayer, they have been praying in words which fell from JESUS' lips ; that, in others, they but echo the language of those who hereafter, robed in white, will sing hallelujahs around the throne of GOD.* Oh, my brethren, encourage these feelings, and yet trust not to them ; possess them, but do not be possessed by them ; use them, but do not abuse them. Beware lest your religion be one of feeling merely, and not of practice. " Men may speak in a high imaginative way of the ancient saints and the holy Apostolic Church, without making the fervour or refinement of their devotions bear upon their conduct." Many a man likes to be religious in graceful language, still more like to converse about religion in the conventional terms of cant and party ; many a man loves religious tales and hymns, and yet is never the better Christian for all this. The works

* Revelation vii. 13-15.

of every day are the tests of our state ;* and that these daily works may be works of piety and charity is not to be brought about at once.† But brought about it will be, if we will but give up ourselves to the guidance of GOD'S word and SPIRIT ; for thus we become the children and friends of GOD.‡ And in no way can we hope to accomplish this better or more effectually than by entering with sanctified earnestness into the value and use of our Book of Common Prayer. Shall we not, as we use these Prayers, remember that the sainted martyrs of a bygone age once used the same words, breathed the same fire of devotion ; hence drank in their spiritual life ; here were taught the true faith of CHRIST ; here learned that in that true faith are hid all the best treasures of true knowledge ; and learned that, therefore, for that faith, as it was their duty, so was it become their resolve to struggle, and, if needs be, to die ?

Let these men, though dead, speak.§ Let their spirit breathe round and within the Christian, in honour and in suffering. “ They say, in

* Matt. vii. 20.

† Luke viii. 15 ; 2 Peter i. 5-7.

‡ Romans viii. 14.

§ Hebrews xi. 4.

a voice that will be heard," CHRIST our SAVIOUR hath been to us a comforter in life and death; HE bade us bear our cross for HIS sake; but HE hath borne it for us. HE hath comforted us with the glad thoughts that these our sufferings will be profitable to HIM and HIS; and that in ages yet to come the suffering Christian will, through grace, be enabled to suffer more boldly and more patiently when he thinks of us."

Such is their language; and may GOD give us all grace seriously to lay it to heart, and may we keep before us, through this course of lectures, these inspiring thoughts, and thus, by GOD'S grace, prepare ourselves to rightly fulfil the obligations imposed upon us, in this our day, to strengthen the things that remain.

LECTURE II.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE PRAYER-BOOK.

DEUT. XII. 8.

Ye shall not alway do after all the things that we do here this day, every man what is right in his own eyes.

THE desire of every man to do what is right in his own eyes is the fruitful source of all error. If you turn to the Book of Judges, you will find much of the rebellion and evil which it records traced to this one cause,—the people doing what is right in their own eyes. Then it was that “the glory departed from Israel,” and the anger of the LORD was visited upon HIS people. And, in the particular passage from which I have selected the words, the lawgiver of ancient times is denouncing the evils of allowing the exercise of private judgment to be without some

control, and declaring that when they be entered into the land of inheritance, that there the thing must be no more; that with a more perfect state must come obedience: that it is inconsistent with the free sovereignty of GOD's allegiance, that every man should do that which is right in his own eyes. And shall we, whose "lines have been cast in the pleasant places" of the fold of CHRIST, not take shame to ourselves, if we be disobedient to the heavenly calling to submit our will to HIM in all things.* Could the Jewish lawgiver appear among the people of the newer Israel, would he not cry with redoubled vigilance, "Ye are come to Jerusalem the city of the living GOD; ye shall not, therefore, do every man what is right in his own eyes." How common is it in this lax age to hear men talk of this and that plan in religion, as though the faith had *not* been delivered once for all to the saints!† How much the spirit of doing certain set things, and of performing certain prescribed duties, has given way to the feeling reproved by Moses of doing what is right in our own eyes. How much of captious dispu-

* James iv. 7.

† Jude, verse 3.

tation is there : how little of filial obedience. It being, then, the object of these lectures to strengthen ourselves in this obedience, and to enumerate some of the beauties of our Jerusalem ; to call to mind the pleasures of her temple, the order of her services, the beauty of her dwellings, the sweetness of her songs, the assiduity of her ministrations, and the comprehensive fidelity of her care for all sorts and conditions of men, it is desirable, in the present lecture, to consider some of the grounds which commend the Book of Common Prayer to our notice as the best exponent to English Churchmen of the Church's view of Holy Scripture, upon the subjects of the faith and practice of the devout servants of the cross. It is obvious that the time is come when many are anxiously on the watch for the hand of their spiritual Mother to guide them ; and, therefore, before we point out what it is which the Book of Common Prayer enjoins in these particulars, we shall do well to prove that, in taking its directions, we are not listening to "cunningly devised fables."*

It is possible, an Apostle tells us,† to wrest

* 2 Peter i. 16.

† 2 Peter iii. 16.

even the blessed Scriptures to our destruction, and, inasmuch as all the various classes and denominations which claim the Christian name avow the Bible to be their exclusive rule of faith, it cannot but conduce to edification to resolve the question which determines the manner in which the Holy Scriptures may be said to answer the description given of them, as a lantern unto our feet, and a light unto our paths.*

The ALMIGHTY has revealed HIMSELF to man on several occasions, and through the intervention of various agencies. The times are few in which GOD the FATHER has directly conversed with man.† Throughout the Old Testament history, the second PERSON in the ever blessed TRINITY for the most part carried on the purposes of Divine Mercy;‡ and hence, if we may venture to speculate where no direct reason is assigned, may we suppose HIM to be termed the WORD of GOD.§ All the earlier intimations of the Divine Will were carried on by the direct agency of HIM who afterward suffered as the SAVIOUR of all that believe on HIM,|| and for

* Psalm cxix. 105.

† 1 John iv. 12.

‡ John i. 18.

§ 1 Chronicles xvii. 3.

|| 1 Timothy iv. 10.

many years the tradition handed down from father to son, was the law to the actions, the lamp to guide the feet of GOD's chosen. *We have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us,** conveys exactly the condition of the early worshippers of JEHOVAH as to the knowledge of HIS will. And so long as the CREATOR saw fit to prolong the period of human existence to the length which HE ordered in the early ages of the world, the possibility of error creeping into a statement was very limited. But, when the number of man's days was shortened, and the change was rapidly taking place, which was to make three score years and ten, the goal in the race of human life, which can only be overshot with a spent and wearied strength;† then the word of the LORD was no longer trusted to *un-written* tradition. The HOLY GHOST then began to speak by the Prophets. The Law and the Testimony‡ were written and made permanent, and the will of the ALMIGHTY was henceforward to be sought in the written records of HIS Church, the books

* Psalm xlv. 1.

† Psalm xc. 10.

‡ Isaiah viii. 20.

of the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. And so things went on, until, "in the fulness of time, CHRIST came."* "The WORD was made flesh and dwelt with man."† "In HIM there was an end of the Law for righteousness unto all that believe in HIM."‡ He came to promulge a new dispensation, and to deliver a new message from heaven. Another important epoch in the Church of GOD was completed, and henceforth CHRIST was to be openly the HEAD over all things to the Church.§ A fresh revelation of the Divine Mind was to be made, and, as in the former instances, so in this, *living men* were the agents employed.|| Our LORD instructed HIS Apostles and commissioned them to go forth and instruct and commission others.¶ The Gospel was passed on from mouth to mouth, and, as long as the Apostles lived, to whom, as men inspired of GOD, appeal could be made, the saints were edified, the household of faith was built up, *without* the Scriptures of the New Testament being gathered into canon.** Oral

* Galatians iv. 4.

† John i. 14.

‡ Romans x. 4.

§ Ephesians i. 22.

|| Matthew xxviii. 18-19.

¶ 2 Timothy ii. 2.

** i. e. Without their being collected into one book as authoritative documents, binding upon the faithful.

instruction, so long as its purity could be guaranteed, was a sufficient proclamation of Gospel truth. And therefore it was not until the hand of death had deprived the Church of inspired men to *speak*, that she, who is the "*Pillar and ground of Truth*,"* sought out what these gifted worthies had *written*, and thus became the "*Witness and keeper of Holy Writ*."† It was not until some years after the disciple whom JESUS loved‡ had concluded the last of the sacred writings, that they were thus gathered into one volume; but thenceforward the New Testament became to the Christian Church what the Old Testament had previously been to the Jews. As, under the elder dispensation of the Law, the HOLY SPIRIT spake by the Prophets: so, under the newer economy of the Gospel, HE has spoken by the Evangelists and Apostles, and, if we would find that Word which the Psalmist assures us is the Truth,§ we need not doubt but that it is contained in our Bibles, in all necessary fulness.

But here arises the further question, by what

* 1 Timothy iii. 15.

† John xxi. 20.

† Article xx.

§ Psalm cxix. 160.

process are we to ascertain the precise meaning of Holy Scripture? How are we to know what is the Truth? How, whether we rightly understand the Word? Are we to go to Scripture to *find* our faith, or to *prove* it? Are the sacred books designed to be in the first instance our instructors; or, are they to be regarded as the touchstone of what we receive from other sources? Has GOD committed the conversion of the world to HIS written word alone: or, has HE confided it to a living ministry, and endowed them with these living oracles,* as a treasury out of which they should bring forth things both new and old?† The Christian world at the present moment presents a lamentable picture of discord and disunion, and yet the leader of each party claims to have inspired authority for his statements. Now all cannot be right, for "GOD is not the author of confusion but of peace in all Churches of the Saints."‡ All cannot be right. Who is? What means has GOD left us for the right understanding of HIS own will? All will agree that the Bible is the Law,

* Matthew xxviii. 18-20. † Matthew xiii. 52.

‡ 1 Corinthians xiv. 33.

beyond which there is no appeal, and the standard by which all controversies must be tried: the testimony which all must hear, and none can gainsay: the fine gold which can never become dim:* the balance of the Sanctuary, and the unvarying shekel by which all must be weighed and measured.† All will agree that Holy Scripture, in the language of our Sixth Article, “*containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed, as an article of THE‡ faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.*” All are agreed thus far, and with the exception of the Socinians (and I except them only because we are speaking of all those “who call themselves Christians,” whether rightly or not is beside the question): all are agreed thus far, and with the exception of the Socinians, all are agreed a step farther,—all will admit that for the

* Lamentations iv. 1.

† Exodus xxxviii. 24.

‡ The definite article is often omitted by those who quote this article to libel our Reformers, by saying that they did not defer to Catholic antiquity: it is not said an article of *any* faith, but of *the* faith: the Church’s faith, the faith of the three Creeds of the Universal Church.

right understanding of Scripture, GOD vouchsafes HIS HOLY SPIRIT; that the HOLY SPIRIT of Wisdom and Truth must take of the things of the FATHER, and shew them unto us, that HE alone can guide us into all truth.* Up to this point the English and Continental Reformers, and after them true Churchmen, and modern Ultra-Protestants, all journey together, but here they diverge and take different roads.

The question recurs, how does the HOLY SPIRIT act for this purpose? and no sooner has the question taken this shape than the conflicting parties cease to return an united answer. The cold rationalist of Germany traces HIS operation in the metaphysical disquisition of a highly cultivated reason: the Ultra-Protestant of another school claims for the dogmas of his individual private judgment, the infallibility, which when claimed by the Romish doctors, is by these same persons charged upon them as a token of the Mystery of Iniquity; while another class will see the footsteps of HIM, the whithersoever of whose going, and the whence of whose coming no man can tell;† will discern the HOLY

* John xvi. 13-15.

† John iii. 8.

SPIRIT of GOD in an excited state of the animal feelings ! But to enumerate the various modes of operation which have been at various times and by different persons assigned to the HOLY SPIRIT of Truth, when acting as the TEACHER and GUIDE of GOD'S Children, would be to lay bare irreverences and crudities which might shock and astonish, but could hardly edify. Enough for us, as faithful sons and daughters of the English Church, to know the verdict she returns upon this subject, and when we know it, that we strive to act upon it.

If, then, we refer to her twentieth article, we shall find that she claims *authority in controversies of faith*, albeit she limits the exercise of this authority by the self-imposed condition, *that it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to GOD'S Word written*. She tells us that the *Church is the Witness and Keeper of Holy Writ* ; and then she adds that, *she ought not to decree anything against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of salvation*. And consistently with this statement she requires her clergy to fashion their teaching out of Scripture by that rule of consent in matters of the

faith which has universally and uniformly obtained everywhere among the faithful.*

She requires this by precept and example. By example, in her accredited formularies, which bear the vivid impress of being Catholic, and in those *Homilies*, which she adjudged to be seasonable and wholesome for the times in which they were written, and which abound with quotations from those whom she there styles *the learned and godly doctors of Primitive Antiquity*. By precept, in one of those canons of discipline of the English Church, which were ratified by the proper ecclesiastical authority in 1571, about nine years after the settling of our Thirty-nine Articles. The title of these canons is as follows: "*there follow in this book certain definite articles concerning the sacred ministry and the regulation of the Churches, which were fully agreed upon in convocation by Matthew Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, and Primate of all England and Metropolitan, and by all the rest of the Bishops of his provinces, a part of them personally present, a part by proxy under their own sign manual, in a convocation assembled in the Church of St. Paul, in London, on the third day of April, 1571.*"

* Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.

Of the validity, then, of these canons, and their obligation upon the Clergy of the English Church, there can be no reasonable doubt, and in one of these canons we find the following among other directions for Preachers: "*First, then, they shall see that they do not ever teach anything in a sermon, which they wish to be religiously held and believed by the people, except what is agreeable to the teaching of the Old and New Testament, AND what the Catholic Fathers and Ancient Bishops have collected from that same teaching.*"

Now, modern Ultra-Protestants, impatient of authority, may consider this rule very foolish, and savouring of Popery; and others, humble-minded sons of the Church, may think it very wise; but whatever people may think is beside the question, here is the simple naked fact that the Reformed Church of England has unequivocally laid it down as the direction for her Clergy. And in the words of Mr. Faber, an independent testimony on the present question, "If we of the Clergy dislike the regulation, as encroaching upon what is sometimes (perhaps without full consideration) denominated the Protestant right of private judgment, we are quite at

liberty, without any persecuting, let, or hindrance, to throw up our ministry ; but I see not how we can honourably retain our office within the pale of the Church, if we professedly despise or openly reject the regulation. We are free to act as men, but we are not free to act as honest *Churchmen*. A pledge has been given and accepted, and by that pledge we are bound, I should think, to abide, so long as we exercise our ministration in the Church of England." And with regard to the wisdom of the regulation, this same writer says, "the wisdom however of the regulation, with all due respect to the nineteenth century, I deem more especially apparent, because it takes the middle course between the Romish doctrine of unwritten tradition on the one hand, and the vulgar modern notion of insulated private judgment on the other hand : the former of which would cause us to rejoice in the teaching of a single Pope ; while the latter, by making every man his own Pope, claims to have produced a '*Bible made easy*.'"

"It is ruled by ancient custom," was a favourite motto in the famous Council of Nice, and such was the constant cry of the leaders of

the English Reformation. The Church of England recognizes the Bible as the sole ultimate test of her creeds or rules of faith ; but to understand the Bible's meaning aright, she rests not on the fallible judgment of herself or her individual members, but humbly decides by the concurrent testimony of the Primitive Church, thus identifying *Catholic* with *Scripture* truth. The Church of England requires of her sons to prove all things, and to invent none ; to examine all her statements by the Bible ; to hold fast* by her only, if she declares what is good, to leave her if she does not ; and in determining this, to defer to the consent of Christian men in past generations ; in other words, she echoes the words of the LORD JESUS CHRIST : If he neglect to HEAR THE CHURCH, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.† But still, you will say, a practical difficulty remains. Where is the Voice of the Church to be found, that we may hear her ? How are we to understand the Word, so as it shall be The Truth ? What is the answer the Church of England makes to such of her dutiful children as say to her—" We admit the

* 1 Thessalonians v. 21.

† Matthew xviii. 17.

authority in controversies of faith, which you claim for the Church Catholic, of which you are an integral branch, but how when we are in doubt are we to ascertain the decisions of this tribunal whose competency we fully admit? We wish to do as did the primitive Christians, we wish to be guided by Catholic antiquity, but how are we to know when we are so guided, how when we are so doing as did they of early times?" The Church would not be acting the part of a Mother, if, without help or cue, she sent these humble inquirers to pore over the folios of ancient wisdom, the records of the Primitive Church, as they are to be found in the writings of the early Fathers. It is not enough that she should say to such: the true test of truth is Catholicity, "*What has been believed by all, in all places, at all times:*" for even were this test of *Vincent of Lirens* as valuable in establishing truth, as it is in *detecting error*, they would have a right to rejoin, "We have not time nor ability to use these means, to apply this test. What, therefore, are we to do?" Hear the Church supply the clue to this answer, in a subsequent part of the canon already quoted. She says, "*and since those articles of the Chris-*

tian religion, which were agreed upon by the Bishops in lawful and holy Synod, convened and held by the command and authority of the most serene Queen Elizabeth, are without doubt collected from the books of the Old and New Testament, and since they agree in all things with the heavenly doctrine herein contained, and since also the Book of Common Prayer, and the book for the ordering of Archbishops, Bishops, Priests and Deacons, contains nothing foreign from this teaching, whosoever shall be sent to teach the people shall ratify the authority and fidelity of these matters, not only by word of mouth, but by his subscription also. Whoever shall do otherwise, and shall disturb the people with contrary doctrine, shall be excommunicated." It is in conformity with this canon that every clergyman is bound to sign a declaration that *he will conform to the Liturgy of the Church of England as now established.*

It is, then, on grounds such as these, that I urge that the devout Churchman's way of faith and practice is to be found in the Book of Common Prayer: and that the Book of Common Prayer is the teaching of the Catholic Church in this country, will appear in the next lecture.

LECTURE III.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE PRAYER BOOK.

PART II.

DEUT. XII. 8.

*Ye shall not do after all the things that we do
here this day, every man what is right in his
own eyes.*

IN my last lecture I showed you that, although all parties among those who call themselves Christians agreed that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation;" and although all (the Socinians only excepted) were further agreed that GOD vouchsafes the assistance of HIS HOLY SPIRIT in the right understanding of Scripture, no two parties were agreed as to how the HOLY SPIRIT did act for this purpose; and hence arose the discord and disunion which meet us on every side. But the rule of the English Church was shown to be to "Stand in the ways,

and see, and ask for the *old paths*.”* While she takes the Bible as the test by which we are to “prove all things,”† she defers to the concurrent testimony of the Primitive Church, which in her Homilies she declares to have been “most pure and uncorrupt,” as her guide to the right understanding of Scripture ; and to those who might object that this testimony cannot be made available, on account of their want of time and ability to examine it, I answered that the teaching of the Primitive Church was embodied in our Book of Common Prayer ; and this I now proceed to prove, by shewing

I. *That the Book of Common Prayer is an authorized document of the Church of England.*

II. *That it contains directions on the points which the Church is supposed to be by our argument competent to decide.*

III. *That these directions are Primitive, Catholic, and Scriptural.*

That the Prayer Book is an authorized document of the Church of England can be denied by none, who know the diligent prayer and study which were bestowed upon its compilation and

* Jeremiah vi. 16.

† 1 Thessalonians v. 21.

revision. It has the sanction of the Church's Synods, which cause it to be binding upon us as baptized members of the Body Mystical of CHRIST. And not to quote the various more direct and express ratifications of this book, I will only refer again to that canon of 1571, by which it is adjudged an offence worthy of excommunication if any preacher shall venture to teach otherwise than the Prayer Book directs. Here then is a clear recognition of the Prayer Book as an Interpreter of Scripture, and we may pass on to consider,

II. Whether the matters which it contains are sufficiently general and comprehensive to allow us to consider it as a *faithful epitome* of what Scripture requires from us as Christian sons and daughters of the English Church. And what are the matters on which we are called upon to hear the Church? I should answer that we are called upon to hear her in all that relates necessarily to our spiritual well-being: in our reading of Holy Scripture, in our interpretation of its teaching, in our faith, in our worship, and in the discharge of our relative duties. In none of these is our Prayer Book wanting. Our Reformers, in putting that book together, have been

careful to provide for a particular course of Bible reading, by attending to which we have *four entire chapters given us as our "daily bread,"** together with a convenient portion of the Psalms of David. We are thus led through the Revelation of GOD'S will to man once every year, while some parts of this blessed book, the Holy Gospels for instance, are brought before us twice and even thrice, the Psalms coming round in monthly course. To interpret the teaching of the Bible, the English Church provides in this book *the Creeds of the Church Universal*, accompanied with certain *Articles of Religion*, which she conceived to be a wise protest against the many errors of the time in which that book was compiled. But more especially we have in this Book of Common Prayer a most perfect commentary of Holy Writ, in the Prayers and Collects, which are in themselves *Creeds* in some sense; that is, without formally stating the grand doctrines of revealed religion, these doctrines are so beautifully embodied when acted upon or prayed from, that a man who denied the *doctrine of original sin*,† or the *free Grace of*

* Matthew vi. 11.

† Psalm li. 5.

GOD,* or the *necessity of the HOLY SPIRIT as a GUIDE to lead into all Truth*,† or the *full and free Atonement* effected by the sacrifice of CHRIST—*once offered for the sins of all* :‡ and who, though denying them, yet used our soul-stirring Liturgy and Daily Service, must be looked upon as doing little else than worshipping some *Baal of his own imagining*§ in the high places of JEHOVAH, as bowing the knee to the calves of Dan or Bethel|| in the house of our GOD !

As regards our *Faith* the Prayer Book is so explicit, that it is demanded from us on almost every occasion that we must meet in the Church. With most scrupulous exactness are all the various steps of life marked by the desire of the Church to have an avowal of our faith. In Holy Baptism the profession is made by sponsors in our behalf: through childhood we are taught its meaning in the Holy Catechism.

And here I may observe the sanction which the Church lends to the main argument of this discourse, by the orders she gives *Godfathers and Godmothers* for the right training of the

* 2 Timothy i. 6.

† John xvi. 13.

‡ 1 John ii. 2.

§ 2 Kings xvii. 16.

|| 1 Kings xii. 29.

children in whose behalf they have answered to the Church. They are to take care that the child learn *the Creed, the LORD'S Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and be further instructed in the Church Catechism*. She does not content herself with saying that they are to be taught the Word of GOD, but she provides for their specific instruction in the definite truths contained in the Creed, and in the Church Catechism. These he is to receive and believe, on the authority of his teacher, his Holy Mother the Church: and then afterwards he may examine for himself their soundness and value, by a comparison of their statements with Holy Scripture. Thus did we all receive our faith, and while we feel grateful that GOD has given *HIS Holy Scripture as the Law*, we must ever be equally thankful that HE has in HIS Holy Church provided us with that which Queen Candace's attendant lacked, *some one to guide us, so that we may understand what we read*.*

But to resume our illustration of the care of the Church to instruct us in our *Faith*: In the transition from childhood to youth, the Creed

* Acts viii. 30-31.

again meets us, ere we receive at the hands of the Bishop the holy and Apostolic rite of *Confirmation*. And then, as we go from youth to manhood and manhood to old age, day by day, the service is incomplete without a formal avowal of our belief; at every turn the Creed is required of us, and thus she bids us remember that to do aright we must first have that regard to the authority of the SON of GOD which is evinced by faith in HIS NAME. For our worship a most ample provision is made in a collection of Prayers beyond which the humble child of GOD need never travel to find all that is suitable for almost any need. While with regard to relative duties, not to mention the threatenings with which the holy season of Lent is ushered in, in the *Commination Service*, nor her continued echo on all Holy days, of the laws which once pealed from Sinai; the Church sufficiently settles this branch of duty in her noble compendium of the *Duty we owe our neighbour*.*

I have now, I trust, shown you that the Church of England in her *Book of Common Prayer* orders and determines authoritatively,

* Church Catechism.

on all points in which a Christian man can reasonably require direction. In that book she speaks and acts upon her Divinely conferred authority in controversies of faith, and from the nature of the case, we come to see that the Prayer Book is the document in which the Church's voice is heard. We may not say as much as this of any one part of the Prayer Book, as of the Articles for instance, but we may say so of the *whole Book of Common Prayer*, with its well selected Scripture passages, its solemn and devotional Prayers and Collects, its guarded offices for the administration of the Holy Sacraments: its recognition and systematic enforcement of the faith as found in the three Creeds: with its well digested directions on points of discipline and order, its heavenly ordinal: no less than its succinct protests against particular heresies which have disturbed the Church of God, and its clear amplification of the affirmative points contained in the three Creeds.

But III. The Prayer Book may be, as we have seen, the Church of England's teaching, but how, it will be further asked, is the plain man to know that it is the teaching of the

Church Catholic? How is he to know that when he is listening to the Bishops who settled our Church at the time of the Reformation, he is listening to the voice of the *Church Universal*? How that the law he has got is *the Truth*? To this I answer that the Prayer Book is *primitive, Catholic, and scriptural*: and *prima facie*, the plain man has no more reason to be distrustful of the Church when she says of the Prayer Book, This is the voice of the Church to you her English children, than he has when she says of the Bible, of which she is the witness and keeper,* this is the voice of God. Fully to develop the argument now before us, would be a work of time. On the present occasion let me supply such a clue, as that you may be in a condition to follow out the argument at your leisure. And in the first place I may briefly remark some of the several grounds which we have for pronouncing it to be scriptural: and foremost in the rank of these we may observe that, as in Scripture, so in the Prayer Book, the truths taught are asserted and enforced independently one of the other. They are looked

* Article xx.

upon as integral manifestations of the mind of GOD, and as such man need not be deterred from avowing them by any fear of their conflicting one with the other. It is the system of harmonizing and reconciling doctrines which man fancies are conflicting, that has been the fruitful source of error in the Church of GOD. Our own existence, and the whole world of nature, is a succession of independent realities, which if we seek to blend them one with the other, prove to have opposing properties, and which yet, under the permissive and superintending direction of the MOST HIGH, result, when not unduly interfered with, in conformity and unity. And so it is in the world of grace. Here there are many things which tempt us to grow impatient and doubt. Puny man, who can see nothing beyond the day or the morrow ; whose sight is at all times through a glass darkly,* would fain see things agree now. But GOD has determined that the revelation of their consent and agreement and harmony, shall be reserved for another and a more enlightened state.* And our wise-hearted Reformers have made our Book of Com-

* 1 Corinthians xiii. 12.

mon Prayer in this, as in other particulars, a near counterpart of the Holy Bible. It is the glory of our Prayer Book that it reflects the Divine Mind, and carries with it the undoubted impress of heavenly truth ; differing in this respect from all less gifted manuals, which bear about with them the traces of human short-sightedness, in the trammels which they impose upon the exercise of that super-human meditation which comes but by measure to the children of Adam, albeit they are renewed as the sons of GOD and brethren of CHRIST.* Charge it as a fault upon the Prayer Book, that it teaches truth incidentally, if you will ; but suffer those who know that GOD reveals HIMSELF as the Rewarder of obediences,† and who know that each fresh ray drawn into the soul from the self-existent Source of Light gives a new strength to the spiritual vision, till mounting up on the eagle wings‡ of a faith disencumbered of the defilements of the flesh, the full vision of Almighty Benevolence feeds no presumption, the naked view of perfect Justice strikes no slavish awe ;

* Romans viii. 16-17.

† John vii. 17.

‡ Isaiah xl. 31.

let, I say, those who are acquainted with this law of GOD'S moral government, rejoice to think that in the Prayer Book provision is made, after the scriptural model, for informing the soul by elevating its conceptions, rather than by lowering and diluting the subjects which are to be submitted to its comprehension !

But in addition to this, the Prayer Book is scriptural, inasmuch as not only is there abundance of direct quotation from the sacred records, but every page breathes the balmy odours of inspiration: the thoughts, the language, the doctrines are heaven-born and Scripture-taught ! With the Bible, the Prayer Book need never be supposed to be in opposition, for we verily believe she contains not a doctrine nor an opinion which conflicts with Scripture ; nay, we boldly affirm that in no essential particular does she ever act without Scripture warrant. And lest we should seem to be in the position merely of those who affirm Scripture to be on their side, because they can quote a text or two in support of their dogma, we are enabled to say of our Prayer Book that it is primitive and Catholic, *i. e.* that what was held and believed to be truth in the earlier ages of Christianity

is now held and received in the Church of England, and embodied for all practical purposes in her code of laws, discipline, and worship, the Book of Common Prayer. A book, my friends, which is not the offspring of yesterday, but which had a date and character long before the Reformation, which contains the creeds of the Universal Church, and is enriched with the devotional forms through which the early heralds of the Gospel, the primitive Confessors, Saints, and Martyrs, approached the white throne of Grace and Mercy.

Such, then, are the blessed privileges of our Zion : need you wonder that I say we should be truly thankful for them. Baptized into the holy Church of GOD, we are possessors of the glorious heir-loom of HIS saints : we have the MOST HIGH as our guardian and friend : HIS law to guide us in the well defined way, and HIS clearly enunciated truth by which to regulate our actions. As members of the Church of England, we are in no uncertainty ; we not only have the law, but we know that we so have it, that it is THE TRUTH. We not only have a claim to the promises, but we can at once place our finger upon the title-deeds which secure to us that

costly inheritance ! It is our blessed privilege to know what we believe, and to be assured, doctrinally no less than practically, of the hope that is in us.* As Churchmen, we are under no alarm when modern scepticism reiterates the taunt which once rung through Pilate's Judgment Hall ; for if it is asked of us what word we believe, we answer it is that Word which is the Truth. And if it be rejoined, *What is truth ?*† we can boldly reply, that we are members incorporate of that Mystical Society the Church, which is its *Witness and Keeper*. Are we asked where our faith is to be found ? We reply, in the *Bible*. Are we told it is disputed what the Bible really says ; we are in no dilemma, for we rejoin, the Holy Creeds contain all the essential doctrinal truths of Holy Scripture ; and our Collects and Prayers teach by implication its deepest mysteries and its highest practical requirements ; while in our *Articles*, particular matters are decided for us as English Christians in this realm, which are not necessarily binding upon other branches of the Church Catholic.

In few words, if we are asked what we mean

* 1 Peter iii. 15.

† John xviii. 38.

by the teaching of the Church in this country? we answer, the scriptural truths and sanctions which we find in our Book of Common Prayer. And if it be objected, that there are men within the Church ordained and sworn as her accredited teachers, who yet are not agreed in the teaching of the Prayer Book, we are bold to make answer, that the assertion is truer as respects their conduct when viewed in reference to their **vows** than when regarded in reference to their reasoning. I seek **not to lay down** rules of conduct for my brethren; but I can safely state that I have never yet found a difference of opinion on the scriptural essentials of our faith among those who admit the Prayer Book to be a legitimate Anglican Interpreter of Holy Scripture. What I mean is, that none deny the *Apostolical Succession of our Ministry*: or the *new birth, in Holy Baptism*: or that the other *Sacrament of our Lord's institution, the Holy Eucharist, is a blessed means of grace*: none deny these fundamental scriptural truths—St. Paul calls them “first principles”^{*}—who admit that they are as much bound as *ordained clergy*

* Hebrews v. 12.

of the English Church to teach according to the Prayer Book, as they are constrained by being professing Christians to abide by the statements of the Bible. Those who admit the Prayer Book as an Interpreter of Scripture, can differ but little, for though separately both Bible and Prayer Book teach for the most part incidentally, yet taken together they teach *definitively and precisely*. And that the clergy are bound to receive the Prayer Book as an Interpreter, is abundantly clear from the Canon more than once referred to. *Those who infer various teaching from the Prayer Book, do so from the same cause that opposing heresies all alike appeal to Holy Scripture!* Such regard their own separate and insulated private judgment as authority paramount to all others : they have not learnt the first lesson of the Church : the first lesson of the Cross of CHRIST : Humility and Obedience ; and when the Prayer Book does not suit them, they reject its statements. The clergy who deny these first truths do so *indirectly* for the most part, and, if directly, then they are acting in spite of their solemn vows and oaths, that they give their unfeigned assent and consent to all things contained in the Prayer Book. If they

cannot abide by the Prayer Book, they ought to leave the Church.

But after all, the differences among the clergy consist but too much in the *angry clamour and strife of words*.^{*} They view truth from different eminences, and see danger from different quarters, and thus they use different key-notes of warning. And if certain parties would lay aside their *evil speaking and slander*, they would find that the rigid Churchman is neither carnal nor worldly-minded, nor unscriptural, because he prefers the judgment of the wise and good in all ages, and the practice of the followers of CHRIST in early times, to the excitement and self-seeking of modern theology. Our LORD has said that HIS disciples shall be known,—*not* by their shibboleth :† *not* by their loud professions of sanctity :‡ *not* by their religious ostentation ;§ but by this, that they love one another,|| and that having heard the word, they keep it and bear fruit with patience.¶ Let us then all remember that *unity is our first law*, that we must be *one*, even as the FATHER and CHRIST are one.^{**} And

* 2 Timothy ii. 14.

† Judges xii. 6.

‡ Luke xviii. 11-12.

§ Matthew vi. 5.

|| John xiii. 35.

¶ Luke viii. 15.

** John xvii. 22.

GOD be praised, even in our most distracted times we never reached that climax of disunion and discord which is the thorn of *merely* Protestant Christendom. GOD be thanked, *we* reformed upon the Apostolical model—we retained the primitive forms, and are no strangers to Catholic usage. To our Book of Common Prayer then we confidently send those who ask us what we profess. We are not dependent upon any particular teacher for the time being. Ours is the teaching of the Catholic Church; not of any individual instructor. Our *faith* and our *prayers* remain the same, whoever may occupy the pulpit. To our Bible we point as our law, to the Church as the Interpreter, and to the Prayer Book as embodying the lessons the Church would teach us. Let us, then, prove that we value this boon aright, by using it as our constant manual of devotion, by acting up to its requirements, by obeying its injunctions, and by imbibing its heavenly temper; and thus shall we be scribes well instructed* unto righteousness, faithful and expecting servants, who are on the watch for the coming of their LORD!†

* Matthew xiii. 52.

† Luke xii. 37.

LECTURE IV.

THE CHURCHMAN'S TEMPER.

1 CORINTHIANS xvi. 13-14.

“ Watch ye ; stand fast in the faith ; quit you like men ; be strong. Let all your things be done with charity.”

HAVING in our last lecture set before you the authority of the Book of Common Prayer, I shall endeavour, in the next place, to gather from that book the Church's view of the requirements of Holy Scripture, concerning the temper which should characterize those who in holy Baptism were added to the Church as those who should be saved.* And, in undertaking to set before you the temper which the Church seems in her Book of Common Prayer to enjoin upon her

* Acts ii. 47.

children, although hardly necessary, it may yet be well to guard myself against the misconstruction, that when I speak of such and such things as required of us by the Prayer Book, I mean to ascribe to her an immediate and independent authority. It may be as well here to repeat, that my object in endeavouring to elicit in the course of these lectures the Churchman's way of faith and practice from the teaching of ~~that~~ book, is, that our minds ~~may~~ be familiar with ~~that~~ definite compendium of sound words* which the Church has in all ages held as the truth of the living GOD ; the Prayer Book standing to us, as I proved in my last lecture, in the relation of an authorized exponent of that which holy men in each successive generation of the Christian Church, have considered to be the mind of the HOLY GHOST, in the teaching of the inspired Apostles.

It is a great relief to the anxious mind to find its enquiry after the things which belong unto its peace,† assisted and protected in the degree that our Prayer Book assists and protects every devout reader of his Bible, who is more bent

* 2 Timothy i. 13.

† Luke xix. 42.

upon holding the once-for-all delivered faith,* than on "doing what is right in his own eyes."† Direct doctrinal statements form but a very small portion of this book: for, with the exception of the three Creeds, which embody the faith of Universal Christendom, and the Thirty-nine Articles, which enunciate, together with certain independent truths, a number of particular truths or protests, intended to meet the prevailing errors of the Romanists, the Schoolmen, and the Anabaptists: with the exception of the three Creeds and the Thirty-nine Articles, Divine Truth is taught in the Prayer Book, much as it is taught in Holy Scripture, incidentally. And, over and above the incidental statements of the Exhortations and Collects, and of the Rubrics, much of the spirit and intention which is set before the English Churchman, as, in some lower sense, an example for his imitation, may be gathered from the general relation of the several parts of the book one to another; and the particular subject proposed for our consideration in this lecture, will also receive some light from the Prefaces and Calendar.

* Jude, verse 3.

† Deuteronomy xii. 8.

The text sets before us the true temper of the Churchman ; and the Prayer Book affords abundant help in realizing that which the Apostle lays down with such comprehensive clearness. The true Christian, then, is

I. Watchful, and as constantly joined with it: Prayerful.

II. Bold in the assertion of truth.

III. And he so demeans himself, as never to infringe upon the golden rule of charity.

And before entering upon the examination of these separate qualifications, I may observe that a like description of the follower of CHRIST is given by this same Apostle, in that portion of his Epistle to the Church of the Thessalonians, which was read as the second lesson of last evening's service,—“ Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly ; comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man ; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of GOD in CHRIST JESUS concerning you. Quench not the spirit. Despise not prophesyings.

Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil."* In both passages a meek and charitable spirit is enjoined; in both the returning blessing for evil; in both a habit of prayer and watchfulness; in both a resolute maintenance of truth, combined with the deferential temper involved in the command to let all our actions be influenced by a motive of charity.

First, then, the Churchman's temper should be one of watchfulness and prayer. It is impossible that any more complete compendium for the exercise of these graces could possibly be provided, than we are furnished with ready to our hands, in the appointment of special seasons for special duties, and the hallowing of each day and each period of our Christian course with forms of prayer. Most fully does our Church realize the inspired truth,—“The day of the LORD so cometh as a thief in the night; for when men shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.”† And well may she adopt as her

* 1 Thessal. v. 14-22.

† 1 Thessal. v. 2-3.

own the language of the Apostle, and say to her members,—“ But ye are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.”* No: verily we are not in darkness, except, indeed, by wilful disobedience we incur that worst of all blindness, the having “ the light which is in us to be darkness.”† The day of the LORD will never overtake the humble and devout Churchman unawares, for he has all along been preparing for his coming, in the faithful discharge of his appointed duties, and in the punctual observance of this allotted time, in the manner which the Church directs. He has never forgotten that it is his to “ crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts,”‡ for the constantly recurring Friday fast has reminded him that, as his LORD died *for* sin, so must he die *to* it. He has never lost sight of his duty to “ rise again unto righteousness;”§ for each recurring Sunday calls to his recollection that he rests from his labour on that day, not in celebration of the completed work of creation, but of the accomplishment of redemption: not because he was

* 1 Thessal. v. 4.

† Matthew vi. 23.

‡ Galatians v. 24.

§ 1 Peter ii. 24.

delivered from Egyptian bondage, but because on that day his LORD burst the trammels of the tomb, in testimony that the FATHER had accepted the ransom price for the manumission of the human race from the tenfold greater degradation of the slavery of sin and death. And that he may not adopt that dangerous view of the sufferings of the IMPASSIBLE, which limits their duration from the period of HIS agony in Gethsemane, a regularly appointed course of Gospel reading brings before him, twelve times* each year, the fact that HIS whole human ministry, if not HIS entire incarnation, was one continued season of humiliation and suffering, which he endured for the joy that was set before HIM,† even the admission of HIS faithful followers to the glories of heaven. Previous to Christmas we are incited to watchfulness by the holy season of Advent; and our minds are halloed for a reverent rejoicing at Easter, by the forty days of Lent. Again, our watchfulness is further promoted and encouraged by the manner of the celebration of the confessions and martyrdoms, in will and in deed, of the Pillars of

* Each gospel being read three times.

† Hebrews xii. 2.

the Christian Church. In fact, the whole framework of the Prayer Book is a constant witness for watchfulness, a constant assistance to the spirit in its warfare upon the flesh, an unceasing aid to the subjugation of that part in man against which his better part requires to be so continually protected. If Christians would but imbibe the temper of watchfulness which the Prayer Book suggests and encourages, they would never be afraid to die, but living or dying they would, though "knowing neither the hour nor the day of their MASTER'S coming,"* yet be ever looking out for their LORD, and proving themselves to be "of the day:" they would "be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation."† Yet watchfulness is not an end, but a means to another duty, which, also, in itself is not an end, though a direct means of blessing. We are bid to "watch unto prayer."‡

The true Christian will have not only a *watchful*, but a *praying* temper. And does not the Prayer Book hallow every season of life, and

* Matthew xxv. 13.

† 1 Thess. v. 8.

‡ 1 Peter iv. 7.

every day of life with prayer? Does not the Church therein order "the Curates of every parish to often admonish the people that they defer not the baptism of their children longer than the first or second Sunday next after their birth, or other Holy Day falling between?" And does she not, when the infant is born again, hallow the first moments of its spiritual life with prayers unto Almighty GOD, that the child "may lead the rest of his life according to that beginning?" Is not her solicitude that the child itself should *pray*, indicated in the charge to the sponsors, that they chiefly provide that he may learn the Creed, the LORD'S *Prayer*, and the Ten Commandments? Is spiritual infancy past? no sooner is the child come to years of discretion, than, having renewed in the presence of GOD and of the congregation, the solemn promise and vow made in his name at his baptism, and having received the blessing of the laying on of hands, in the Apostolic rite of Confirmation, most earnest prayer is made for the constant presence and guidance of GOD, the Blessed COMFORTER. The partaking of the LORD'S Supper is one continued act of Eucharistic prayer. Does time pass on, and are the

thoughts of him whom we have followed from the font to the altar, turned upon the honourable estate of Holy Matrimony, "instituted of GOD in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt CHRIST and HIS Church, which holy estate CHRIST adorned and beautified with HIS presence and first miracle that HE wrought in Cana of Galilee?" The Church stands ready to hallow the sacred wish, and to invoke the Divine blessing upon a step which is "not by any to be enterprised, nor taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly." Having adjured those seeking to enter into this estate, in language the most solemn, the declaration of mutual fidelity is made, and the pledge-token given, and then the blessing wherewith Isaac and Rebecca lived faithfully together, is besought, and they are pronounced to be "man and wife together, in the name of the FATHER and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST." Prayer is then further made that the blessing wherewith Abraham and Sarah were blessed may be vouchsafed to them, that they may be happy in their children, and that they may be abundantly blessed in all choice spiritual blessings. Nor is the Baptism

of young children the only solicitude in respect of prayer evinced by the Church in the case of childbirth. She has her form of Eucharistic prayer for the mother, in which, after the pattern of holy women under the law, she may come and present herself before the LORD. Are any sick? the Church trusts not to human means alone for their bodily recovery, but encourages her children to seek to have the Church's prayer for those distressed in body, particularized in their own case; and she further provides assistance for the continuance of her sick members in the unity of the Church, by a form in the use of which the Elders of the Church may fulfil their part, when any sick send for them to pray over them :* and that none may be debarred her highest act of worship, she makes provision for the "Communion of the sick." And is all over, and hope exhausted; does the quick sigh and sinking pulse, and the upturned look of resignation, bespeak that the struggle is at an end, that Death is spoiled of its sting, and the soul is ready to take its flight to the Paradise of God? The Church has its Prayer of Commem-

* James v. 14.

dation, on which, as with eagle wings,* it may mount into the presence of the waiting blest. Nor does she forget to duly honour a body which in life was a temple of the HOLY GHOST.† She gives it not the burial of an ass, but consigns it to a hallowed home in the Church's territory, to await the summons when earth and sea shall give up their dead.‡ And although she does not venture upon an usage which has been so fearfully perverted to superstition, as to offer any prayer for them that are gone, she seizes upon the opportunity to ask a blessing upon the living, and to pray that they may have a share and part in the glorious resurrection to eternal life. But it is not only in these epochs of the Christian and the natural life, that the Church points out her value for a praying temper : it is to be found in the fact that she has arranged a Form of Devotion, to be said twice daily throughout the year,§ marking Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, the days of our LORD'S Resurrec-

* Isaiah xl. 31.

† 1 Corinthians vi. 19.

‡ Revelations xx. 13.

§ See a Sermon on the Daily Service, in a volume of Sermons on Doctrine, Discipline, and Practice, by the same Author. Rivingtons, London.

tion, Betrayal, and Crucifixion, with the increased solemnity of the Litany, and Sundays and other Holy Days with the celebration of the Order of the Holy Communion. In addition to this, her Forty Days of Lent, her four Ember Seasons, her three Rogation Days, and her recurring vigils, are to be employed in increased devotions. Enough then has been said to show that he is no lover of the Book of Common Prayer, who omits constant watchfulness and constant prayer.

It would not be possible within our present limits to do justice to the duty which the Prayer Book in its history, its form, and its statements, as a faithful exponent of God's Holy Word, requires of us to be bold and resolute in our assertion of our master's truth; this duty of contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints,* as a part of the true Churchman's temper, must be reserved for our next lecture, as it requires to be stated in connexion with that duty of charity which forbids the railing accusation, while it enjoins the firm remonstrance; and I shall therefore conclude

* Jude, verse 3.

now with a few remarks, having for their object the elucidation of the grounds upon which our Reformers proceeded in the settlement of that faith in which the Church expects her members to stand fast.

Our faith, then, says the Apostle, stands, not like other knowledge, in the wisdom of men, but in the power of GOD, and the demonstration of the SPIRIT.* It needs not that I should shew you that the truths of our religion are so adorable in themselves, so important to us, and so convincing in their evidence, as to be able effectually to silence the gainsayers; and yet it well becomes us to ask why these truths are so little understood, and have so little practical hold on men's lives. If the excellency of an object can invite us to examine it, here we have GOD in all HIS Glory, the revelations of HIS WILL,—the mysteries of HIS Nature,—HIS Greatness,—HIS Goodness,—HIS Mercy, to occupy us. To continue, therefore, in such a faith, and earnestly to contend for it, is no less a privilege than a duty; but, in order that we may do so, in spite of all temp-

* 1 Corinthians ii. 4-5.

tations which may lure us to lukewarmness or apostacy, we must take care, according to apostolic maxim, to be grounded and well settled in it.* To believe in such a manner as to be ready, if occasion demand it, to suffer and to die for his faith; let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind concerning it.† Think it not to be enough that you have been born in a country and bred in a faith which calls itself Christian; but, giving all diligence, add to your faith knowledge,‡ and the certainty of those things wherein you have been instructed. To a faith and knowledge thus instructed and assured, may, in some measure, be ascribed the courage and success of the first heralds of CHRIST'S Gospel. Their zeal for Christianity was the effect of their understanding it. This was the victory that overcame the world, even their faith,§—but a faith to them no less than the evidence of things not seen, of the things they hoped for:|| and thus we need not wonder at the conquests achieved by this faith, and that all other considerations in comparison of these

* Ephesians iii. 17.

† Romans xiv. 5.

‡ 2 Peter i. 5.

§ 1 John v. 4.

|| Hebrews xi. 1.

were contemptible and insignificant. Much rather may we wonder that the absence of the spirit which originally prevailed, does not go far to destroy it altogether. At any rate, let us give all diligence to judge all things with exactness, to learn the way we should choose, and so shall our soul dwell at ease;* and, in order hereto, let us consider the rules and directions by which we are to be guided.

“The great rule which GOD hath given us whereby to prove our faith and make trial of our religion, is the Scripture from which it is taken; a rule so perfect that it contains all, and so plain that it makes clear all whatsoever things are necessary for us to believe and to do in order to eternal life.” The perfection of this rule, as a competent director of our faith and manners, was, for many successive ages, universally submitted to by the Christian family, till the Church of Rome found occasion to add much to the length of it, and to make room for the hay and the stubble, and the innovations which she had built upon it. She stretched it out with her traditions, forming a supplement to its revelations on points of necessary faith, and a

* Psalm xxv. 12-13.

rival to its authority ! And, indeed, when once she had thus decreed feloniously to alter the Word of Life, the wisest thing that she could do was to lock it up from public view, and to make it, as she quickly did, one article of her faith, that it was unlawful to examine it. But the Word of GOD, my brethren, could not long be bound ; and no sooner were our Bibles restored into our churches, and our understandings set at liberty from popish thralldom, than the ancient bounds of truth were seen, the foundations of it discovered, and the fraud of Romish additions detected. To this standard, the Bishops of the English Church at the Reformation submitted our doctrines. Conscious of her own sincerity in agreeing entirely with GOD's Word, and of laying upon us no greater burden than those necessary things which the Scripture itself has declared to be so, our Church challenges inquiry, discards Latin mass books, and gives us all her public documents in the tongue wherein we were born.* With regard to the rule of Faith, she looks upon herself as the interpreter of its meaning, competent, though not infallible,—competent, since she echoes but

* Acts ii. 8.

the voice of Universal Christendom, and has treasured, in her noble Book of Common Prayer, the concurrent commentary of God's true people. Thus does she confine within bounds her ministers, the expounders of the law, for whom she and all received of the LORD, and to whom also she hath delivered such powers as are necessary to preach and explain the Scriptures; she leaves not these to their own discretion, forbidding them, on the direst penalties, to add to, or diminish from, Scripture; she commands them to compare spiritual things with spiritual,* enjoining the preaching of the Gospel, not as each individual may think fit, but in the sense in which this Church and realm have received the same,† that sense being first ascertained to be the sense of the Universal Church; for our Reformers were Reformers, not Destroyers, and they restored on the primitive model. Had these rules been but as religiously observed in other Churches, such doctrines as Purgatory, Infallibility, Denial of the cup to the Laity, the Worship of Images, and

* 1 Corinthians ii. 13.

† See The Certain Sound on Zion's Trumpet, Sermon xx. in Sermons on Doctrine, Discipline, and Practice.

Adoration of the Blessed Virgin, would never have been heard of, for they are fancies of men. Concerning them Scripture is silent, or speaks only to condemn; neither have the Churches of God any such custom.* Had these rules been observed, the words, "This is MY body,"† would have continued to be understood as Apostolic men received them, and not as Paschasius perverted them in the tenth century. Had this caution been observed, no man could have taken occasion to deduce from St. Paul, in whom St. Peter tells us are many things hard to be understood,‡ the gloomy doctrines of Geneva's harsh doctor, John Calvin,—doctrines involving the slavery of our wills and the fatality of our actions. If we would avoid these and other forms of heresy, let us receive the ingrafted word with meekness;§ for "them that are meek shall HE guide in judgment, and those that are humble shall HE teach His way."|| Thus you will learn to find no thralldom in submitting to the judgment of the Church. Hear the Church

* 1 Corinthians xi. 16.

† Matthew xxvi. 26.

‡ 2 Peter iii. 16.

§ James i. 21.

|| Psalm xxv. 8.

with reverence, and with cheerfulness obey her ; submitting to her decrees, and giving ear to her instructions, not because she has in herself any right to domineer over your faith, but as a guardian of the Truth, and a helper to your joy and proficiency. And, again, because the practice of any law is the best comment on its sense, and the surest light by which we can proceed in its explanation ; we have, besides, the form of sound words conveyed to us by the Apostles, the example and consent of those who more immediately succeeded them : and great reason have we, who, in comparison of the first Christians, are of yesterday, and know nothing,* to bless GOD that HE has preserved to us so much of the writings of the primitive Christians and early Fathers of the Church, as better evidence than modern commentators to the sense in which the Apostles designed their exhortations. Great advantage have these witnesses, and of much profit is their testimony ; “much every way, but chiefly, because unto them were committed the oracles of GOD :”† from their hands we have received ; on their authority we

* Job viii. 9.

† Romans iii. 2.

depend for the canon of the Scripture. To whom, therefore, can we so well appeal, as the best interpreters of the Gospel, as to those who were its first guardians? Whom should we first consult about the meaning of these writings but those who were employed to convey them to us in the first instance? Whom but those who were intrusted to fix the number of those books, and to determine which are genuine? And now, my beloved brethren, if we are convinced of the duty of examining our religion, and of the certainty of those rules by which we must examine it, let us begin without delay; let us try the Church of which we are members by the Scripture; the authority and the reason she appeals to. This is the Christian's free enquiry;* not to labour to prove her wrong, but fairly to weigh her merits; and, for this purpose, divest yourselves of the prejudices of your education: I dare *almost* say (but that it would seem to be tempting GOD), forget for a moment, if you can, how ye were baptized into her faith, and nourished in her bosom; forget how confessors have suffered, and saints and martyrs bled; lay aside every

* Cf. a passage of Bishop Beveridge's to this effect.

weight that may give a bias to your judgments and make you partial to her interests. Then walk about our Zion ; mark well her bulwarks, and tell the towers thereof :* compare her with other Churches, and if, among all the daughters who have reformed and done wisely, our Church, upon comparison, appears not to excel them all ; † if any one of them can contend with her in the beauty of her holiness, the Catholic symmetry of her fair proportions, and her close resemblance to the primitive model ; choose this day whom ye will serve. ‡ But if, on inquiry, it turn out that, as to her public records, her prayers, creeds, articles, ordinal, and all her offices, her foundations are on the holy hills ; § that the LORD HIMSELF hath tried her ; if she is apostolical in her government, and significant in her ceremonies, let us approve as lawful, let us reverence as holy, let us observe as necessary, the ordinances she enjoins us : let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering ; || let us earnestly contend for the faith once delivered

* Psalm xlvi. 11-12.

† Proverbs xxxi. 29.

‡ Joshua xxiv. 15.

§ Psalm lxxxvii. 1.

|| Hebrews x. 23.

unto the saints,* and behave ourselves like men for the house of our GOD and the offices thereof.

The enemies of Jerusalem are come up against her on every side ; there is not an article of her faith, nor either of her Sacraments ; no discipline, scarce one ceremony in her worship, but some or other have insulted it. In so unnatural a defection, when so many of her disciples steal away and walk no more with her, may not the Church, HIS bride, speak as the SAVIOUR to the Twelve on but too parallel an occasion : “ Will ye also go away ? ” And may we not with reverence answer : To whom, Holy Mother, and whither shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life ; † thy doctrine is the truth ; all is comely in thy worship and salutary in thy discipline. Though we should die in thy defence, yet never will we betray thee ; though all men should forsake thee, yet will not we forsake thee ; ‡ but, with our work in one hand, and our weapon in the other, § we will rebuild thy wall and defend thy bulwarks ; repel

* Jude, verse 3.

† Matthew xxvi. 35.

† John vi. 66-67-68.

§ Nehemiah iv. 17.

with our last vigour, the schisms and heresies that shall offer to invade thee.

And now, O LORD GOD, if there be any such thing, any one thing of those many of which our adversaries accuse us, in the constitution of our Church; if there be any wickedness or uncharitableness in her terms of communion, yea, if her arms be not open to all, even to those who, without any cause, are her enemies, then let the enemy persecute our Church and take it; let him tread her altars down upon the earth, and lay her honour in the dust.* But, if she preaches no other word save only that which THOU, O LORD, hast taught her; if she lays claim to no authority but that, O GOD, which THOU THYSELF hast given her, then, in mercy do THOU look down and visit this THY vine which THINE own right hand hath planted† in these kingdoms; that as she is watered with THY blood, so she may flourish in THY protection: let the gates of hell, let the powers of darkness be never more suffered to prevail against her.‡ May the promises THOU hast

* Psalm vii. 5.

† Psalm lxxx. 14-15.

‡ Matthew xvi. 18.

vouchsafed to the Church Catholic in general, be more especially accomplished in this our reformed part of the vast whole; and, in the soundness of her doctrine, in the decency of her worship, in the efficacy of her sacraments, and the validity of her ordinances, do THOU graciously continue to be with her alway, even unto the end of the world.* Amen.

* Matthew xxviii. 20.

LECTURE V.

THE CHURCHMAN'S TEMPER.

PART II.

1 CORINTHIANS xvi. 13-14.

Watch ye ; stand fast in the faith ; quit you like men : be strong. Let all your things be done with charity.

THE duty of encouraging a habit of watchfulness conjoined with prayer, as forming part of the Churchman's temper, was considered in our last lecture ; and I then, also, took occasion to point out the grounds upon which our Reformers proceeded, in the settlement of that faith in which she expects her members to stand fast. I shewed you how they at once recognized the supremacy of Scripture, and the value of the united witness of universal Christendom, to

those truths which she requires of every man as articles of faith, requisite and necessary to salvation ; and I reserved for the present occasion, to bring before you the duty which the Prayer Book, in its history, its form, and its statements, as a faithful exponent of GOD'S Holy Word, requires of us,—to be bold and resolute in our assertion of our MASTER'S truth, as it stands related to that charity which forbids the railing accusation, while it enjoins the firm remonstrance.

It is the hollow-hearted fashion of the day, to dignify a mawkish indifference with the high and sacred name of charity, and to brand all stern maintenance of principle with the epithets of bigotry and intolerance. Concessions the most important are made, to secure advantages the least unequivocal ; and compromise and conciliation have become as it were mere synonyms. But this, surely, must be a temper very alien from the Gospel, which records the emphatic declaration of our blessed LORD,—“ Whosoever, therefore, shall confess ME before men, him will I confess also before MY FATHER which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny ME before men, him will I also deny before MY

FATHER which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth ; I came not to send peace, but a sword.”* It cannot be that they are true expounders of the Gospel, whose faith is intelligible, only on the supposition that, to ascertain abstract truth in Divine matters is not placed within human reach. The so-called philosophy of modern religionism, is, in point of fact, a renunciation of the unchangeable verities of the Divine kingdom ; and is a base imputation upon the characters of those, who, in early and later times, have perilled their lives for the truth's sake.

This is not an age of martyrdom. Christians are not now called upon to defend their opinions with their blood. It is our lot, to live in times when there is more danger of hypocrisy, from the fashionableness of religion, than of apostacy, from the cruelties with which its professors are visited. Still, there is the same necessity of standing fast in the faith ; the same obligation to quit ourselves like men, and to be strong. The duty of “living peaceably with all men,” is still qualified by “*if it be possible ;*”† and the

* Matthew x. 32-33-34.

† Romans xii. 18.

contest for truth is still an arduous one, requiring energy and a forbearing patience. In every age, the calling of a Christian is a warfare ; and the soul's conflict may be as trying, and as harassing, and painful, when appearances may seem to falsify the MASTER'S declaration,—“ Many are called, but few chosen,”* as when the remnant of GOD'S new Israel seems well-nigh extinct, and the Church's very existence, is, humanly speaking, in peril. In other words, the really true and faithful disciple of his MASTER, may have as much difficulty in obeying the command of the text, when the whole surface of society is, as it were, an agitated sea of enthusiasm about religion, as when the little band of faithful ones are driven to caves and upper rooms to carry on their worship. Or, to illustrate my meaning farther, the genuine disciple of CHRIST in this country, has disappointments to encounter, and crosses to bear, which, though they may leave the body harmless, yet shall, from their fallacious peculiarities, require as much true Christian fortitude as sustained the poor suffering Church of Scotland, when pres-

* Matthew xx. 16.

byterian tyranny, with all the bitterness of a persecuting Saul, haled those men and women to prison,* who should dare to worship GOD in the consecrated language of the Church, and to receive the Sacraments at the hands of the lawful successors of the Apostles of CHRIST in that country! Do you think I am overcharging the picture? Look with me, I beg, on the general aspect of the so-called religious world. Listen to the ugly names which are everywhere cast at those who act upon the principle, that whatever in religion is old, is, *eo nomine*, true; while whatever in religion is new, is, *eo nomine*, false. It would be well if seceders, and men with unworthy views of Church government, would learn that religion does not consist in reviling their neighbours, and that a man may call another "blind," "bigot," "intolerant," "semi-papist," and a thousand and one other such names, and yet be very far from fidelity to a MASTER, who has given this as HIS unchangeable word,—“By this shall all men know that ye are MY disciples, if ye have love one to another.”† But, so long as this line of conduct

* Acts xxii. 4.

† John xiii. 35.

is indulged in, it is obvious, that there is need for all constancy, and all long-suffering, upon the part of those who realize their obligation to guard with jealous fidelity the sacred deposit of the faith, delivered once for all to the saints. Let the world, whether religious or profane, abuse on! The Gospel's LORD has told us to be suspicious of ourselves, *not* when our conduct excites opposition; but HIS words are,—“ Woe unto you, when all men speak well of you !” * The use we should make of that persecution, which consists of idle charges, coined in falsehood, and made with flippancy, is, that increase of watchful prayer, by which we may hope to engage the LORD's hosts upon our side, and so be enabled to stand fast in the faith, to quit us like men, to be strong, and, above all, to let all our things be done with charity.

This is the course which is enjoined in Scripture, and which is illustrated and enforced by the history, the form, and statements of the Book of Common Prayer.

It is not possible to conceive a more striking instance of compliance with the requirements of

* Luke vi. 26.

the text, than is afforded by the history of the Prayer Book. Those upon whom fell the work of restoring to the people the opportunity of praying with the spirit and with the understanding also, and of providing that he that occupies the room of the unlearned may say Amen at the giving of thanks,* had a difficult task before them. They were beset with two classes of fault finders; and it is wonderful to observe how valiantly they were enabled “to keep the mean between two extremes, of too much stiffness in refusing, and of too much easiness in admitting, any variation from”† the public Liturgy. They maintained the old faith at all hazards, save only that they would not sacrifice charity. And when, in March 1661, King Charles the Second issued a commission to empower twelve of the Bishops, and twelve of the Presbyterian Divines, to consider the objections raised against the Liturgy, the extent of their power was thus defined:—“*To compare the Common Prayer Book with the most ancient Liturgies that had been used in the Church, in the most primitive and purest times.*”

* 1 Corinthians xiv. 15-16.

† Preface to the Book of Common Prayer.

And thus it is, brethren, that we are blessed with the ancient faith, and required by the history of its settlement among us, to stand fast in it, and quit ourselves like men. When we remember that those Bishops who compiled our Prayer Book, had not only to reform us from Popish error, but also to make a stand against Genevan corruption, we can in some sort realize the difficulty of their position, and see how necessary it was that they should be firm while they were charitable, and courteous while they were bold. Dr. Hammond, in his paraphrase on our text, considers the command,—“ Let all your things be done with charity,” to be tantamount to a charge to avoid divisions. And certainly nothing could have been more carefully kept in view by any, than was the desire not to offend unnecessarily, in the minds of these compilers of the Prayer Book. “ Our general aim,” say they, “ was not to gratify this or that party, in any of their unreasonable demands, but to do that which, to our best understandings, we conceived might most tend to the preservation of peace and unity in the Church ; the procuring of reverence, and exciting of piety and devotion in the public worship of GOD ; and the cutting

off occasion, from them that seek occasion, of cavil or quarrel against the Liturgy of the Church." They were anxious so to reform as not to destroy anything, which, being fundamental, was also ancient ; that so the number of those who left us to form the Roman schism in this country, might not only be small, but without this excuse for their secession, that they had been robbed of old and essential truth. And, on the other hand, they forbore to enforce ceremonies and customs, which, though in themselves ancient and commendable, had yet been abused to such abominable superstitions, as to render their continuance then, a matter of questionable wisdom ; thus removing all just cause of scandal out of the way of those, whose heated zeal against Rome, had filled them with a horror of superstition so indiscriminate, as naturally to result in irreverence and licentiousness.

The same resolute maintenance of truth coupled with charity, is to be found in the form in which the Prayer Book has come down to us. In every service there is a bold avowal of our faith, and, at the same time, a recognition of the fact, that mutual love is the true test of the confession of CHRIST before men. The title-

page proclaims the unity of the Church, as compatible with the liberty of each branch of the Church to arrange and settle its own liturgical forms. It is The Book of Common Prayer, and administration of the Sacraments of THE Church, according to *the use of the* United Church of England and Ireland. For every important period of life there is a settled form, suitable to the emergency; and thus various and contending opinions and practices are prevented. Opposition to error nowhere takes the form of personal animosity; and, while heresy is carefully excluded, this is done, wherever possible, by the assertion of contravened truth, rather than the express refutation of the specific error. We have, in this book, Forms of Daily Prayer, Special Services, appropriate to special seasons, the three Creeds, an Order for the Celebration of the Sacrament of Love, and the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion: nor is it easy to conceive, that, by any wisdom of arrangement, a public manual, more conducive to the stern maintenance of truth, coupled with the fullest exercise of charity, could have been devised. Its very form teaches us our dependent character, and the necessity there is that guards

and fences should be set around the faith : and so numerous are its statements to the same effect, that we must content ourselves with alluding to a few of them.

And first, let us remember that the Priest is directed to say of the newly-baptized infant,—
“ We receive this child into the congregation of CHRIST’S flock, and do sign him with the sign of the Cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of CHRIST crucified, and manfully to fight under HIS banner, against sin, the world, and the Devil, and to continue CHRIST’S faithful soldier and servant unto his life’s end.” The earliest lesson of childhood, is the LORD’S Prayer, in which charity and hatred of sin are taught ; for we therein pray to be delivered from all evil, and ask for mercy on the condition of extending it to others. Then, in the Catechism, we are taught the value of that Creed, and of that Prayer ; and so instructed, also, on our duty to GOD and to our neighbour, as to leave no room for cowardice in maintaining the truth, or for uncharitableness in rebutting error. For a like purpose are we confirmed ; and, day by day, we pray that we may “ hold the faith in unity

of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life." Twice each day are we required to sound forth our faith; and never are we allowed to partake of the symbols of Redeeming Love, without praying that GOD would "continually inspire the universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord;" and that HE would "grant that all they who do confess HIS Holy Name, may agree in the truth of HIS Holy Word, and live in unity and Godly love;" nor without being reminded that those only who are in love and charity with their neighbours, and have true faith, are qualified to receive them.

In the collect for St. Stephen's Day, we pray that in all our sufferings here upon earth, for the testimony of the truth, we may stedfastly look up to heaven, and, by faith, behold the glory that shall be revealed; and, being filled with the HOLY GHOST, may learn to love and bless our persecutors. In that for St. John the Evangelist's Day, we pray that the Church may walk in the light of GOD's truth. In that for the Innocents' Day, we pray to be so strengthened by GOD's grace, that, by the innocency of our lives, and constancy of our faith, even unto

death, we may glorify HIS Holy Name. In the Collect for Quinquagesima Sunday, charity is most beautifully besought. In that for St. Mark's Day, we seek "grace, that being not like children carried away by every blast of vain doctrine, we may be established in the truth of the Holy Gospel." On St. Philip and St. James's Day, we ask to be enabled to steadfastly walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life. On St. Simon and St. Jude's, we pray to be "joined together in unity of spirit." And, to sum up all these passages, which might easily be extended, the prayer offered by the Bishop in Confirmation, is as follows :—

"Almighty and everlasting GOD, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants, by Water and the HOLY GHOST, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins ; Strengthen them, we beseech THEE, O LORD, with the HOLY GHOST the COMFORTER, and daily increase in them THY manifold gifts of Grace ; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness ; and fill them, O LORD, with the spirit of THY holy fear, now and for ever. *Amen.*"

Now from all that has been said, this much may be gathered : that we owe a duty to truth, and that is, earnestly to contend for it ; and that we owe a further duty to the God of Truth, and that is, to let all our things be done with charity.

We must never be ashamed of our MASTER, either by word or deed, or HE will be ashamed of us, in the day when HE comes to judge the world. Let the Churchman ever bear in mind, that he is called upon to be watchful, and to be full of prayer, and that his temper must also be one which unites, with an unflinching opposition to error, an untiring love of the persons of those who are involved in that error. Let us especially beware of becoming mere partizans in religion. Let us be careful to give no occasion to others to speak evil of us ; and when we are called upon to remonstrate with others, let it be in the spirit of meekness, that we rebuke those who oppose themselves.* We must never lose sight of the sanctity and reverence attaching to GOD, and to all that belongs to HIM, and we shall reverence HIS Name, HIS Church, HIS Sacra-

* 2 Timothy ii. 25.

ments, HIS commands ; and this, too, at all times, and in all places, in spite of all opposition, in spite of all censure, in spite of public opinion, in spite of the changed and changing circumstances of the day. We fail in our duty of Christian boldness, if slight is offered, directly or indirectly, to GOD, and we suffer the insult to pass unnoticed, in such manner as falls within our province to reprove it. And we fail in our duty of Christian charity, if we so maintain truth, or so rebuke error, as to become revilers and false accusers. We shall avoid the railing accusation, and never substitute the calling of hard names, for the use of fair argument and Christian remonstrance. We shall be gentle, yet firm ; bold, yet courteous. We shall, in a word, remember, that it is affirmed of HIM whose truth we would defend, that GOD is Love !*

* 1 John iv. 16. For a further amplification of this Christian Duty of Charity, see Sermons XI. and XII. in the volume already quoted.

LECTURE VI.

BEHAVIOUR IN CHURCH.

PSALM xxvii. 8.

LORD *I have loved the habitation of* THINE
house, and the place where THINE *Honour*
dwellleth.

THE Psalm from which these words are taken, is one of those in which we have been this day joining, as part of our accustomed worship; and it will therefore be fresh in your memories, that in it the royal Psalmist appeals to the MOST HIGH, to vindicate his integrity, and to deliver him from his enemies. It has been considered as belonging to former times, and to relate to his persecution by Saul, when we find him in the cave at Engedi, urging to his persecutor,—
“ Wherefore hearest thou men’s words, saying,

Behold, David seeketh thy hurt :”* and that being thus regarded as a public enemy, it is the opinion of commentators that he was now among the Philistines, or in some other strange country, in which he had been compelled to seek a refuge from the congregation of evil doers.

In accordance with this view of the subject, we find him alluding to his being charged with grievous crimes, and to his fearlessness, notwithstanding, in the confidence that GOD should judge his cause ; and that HE to whom all hearts are open, should try and examine his inmost thoughts. We may imagine him to have had in his mind the uprightness of his conduct when at the Court of Saul, an uprightness to which Jonathan bore testimony, when (as we read in 1 Samuel xix. 4-5-6) “ Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David, because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good : for he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine ; and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all

* 1 Samuel xxiv. 9.

Israel : thou sawest it, and didst rejoice. Wherefore, then, wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause? And Saul hearkened to the voice of Jonathan ; and Saul sware, as the LORD liveth, he shall not be slain.” And in like manner, when he had been banished thence, he was not tempted by malice or revenge, to imbrue his hands in unrighteous blood, but he could recollect that he had urged to his bitter enemy,—“ Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to-day into mine hand, in the cave ; and some bade me kill thee : but mine eye spared thee ; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord, for he is the LORD’s annointed. Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand ; for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou, and see, that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand ; and I have not sinned against thee : yet thou huntest my soul to take it. The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee ; but mine hand shall not be upon thee.”*

* 1 Samuel xxiv. 10-11-12.

But this consciousness of his being able to invite the testimony of his MAKER as to the integrity of his motives, did not banish from his mind, the need in which he stood of frequent periodical assurances of the Divine favour ; and his mind turned from the scene of his captivity to the home of his faith, the favoured land where JEHOVAH had HIS temple. He sighs for the sanctuary and its ordinances ; for the ark of the LORD and the appurtenances thereof. The Psalmist felt that, sinful creatures as we are, there is impurity attaching to our holiest things ; and he knew that the appointed means of purification were to be solemnized in the place in which GOD'S Name was set ; that it was to the performance of certain specified acts of outward worship that GOD had promised to annex HIS blessing ; and although he knew that he could receive no favour from GOD, unless he washed his hands in innocency, yet the proximate cause of his doing so was, that he might approach the Altar ; for he knew that it was there that GOD would come unto him and bless him. We may not doubt that the uniform temper by which David was characterized, was such a recognition of the Divine arm in all that fell out, as to make

his whole life one of thankfulness ; yet he felt that especial acts were required of him, and he longed to mingle once again among the throng of GOD'S elder Church, and shew forth the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all HIS wondrous works ; and he breaks forth, in the passionate language of the text,—“ LORD, I have loved the habitation of THY house, and the place where THINE Honour dwelleth.”

I would remark of the first part of this verse, that it has been a question whether David intended by the phrase, “ I have loved the habitation of THINE house,” to express the same sentiments as he embodies in the fourth verse of the following Psalm, where he says : “ One thing have I desired of the LORD, which I will require : even that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the LORD, and to visit HIS temple ;” or whether he purposed thereby to convey the truth, that the temple is GOD'S more immediate earthly dwelling, and that, while HE fills all nature with HIS Presence, yet, HE is more specially and peculiarly manifested in those places where the more direct acts of worship and homage are offered to HIS Sovereign

Majesty. The soundest interpreters maintain the latter view ; and we may safely regard the text as inculcating the important doctrine, that the ALMIGHTY condescends to acknowledge a distinction among the productions of the universe which HE has created ; and that, while there is not the nook nor the corner of earth, or heaven, or hell, to which HIS illimitable Presence fails to reach, that yet HIS Houses of Prayer are to be held peculiarly sacred, as the spots where, in fulfilment of HIS gracious promise to be present with HIS two or three faithful ones,* HE may be more especially said to have (if we may be allowed the expression) HIS earthly habitation ; that yet, the holy precincts, wherein are celebrated the Mysteries of our Redemption, the Fountain of our New Birth, and the celebration of the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of our SAVIOUR, may with justice be described as the places where HIS honour loveth to dwell. I say the text may be taken as indicating this much ; for surely it will not be denied, that our Christian Churches are, not only *as* emphatically the habitations of GOD'S

* Matthew xviii. 20.

house, and the places where HIS Honour loves to dwell, but *more* so than the Jewish Temple, at the time when the Psalmist wrote.

As Christians, we live under a Theocracy ; and although MESSIAH, our Prince, be exalted* far above out of our sight, yet, we have sure and express Scripture warrant for the belief that our Churches are to be regarded as the earthly palaces of the KING of Kings, and that, consequently, "all due reverence is to be used," when we go to the House of GOD. Let it not be said that the doctrine of Holy Places, is one suited only to the times of Jewish darkness. It is a doctrine supernaturally adapted to the yearnings of the human heart, and is based on a merciful recognition of the necessity which exists, that our perception of things unseen, should be kept alive by such tangible evidence to their reality, as is within the test of the senses. And, although our true life can only be sustained by faith, yet faith is a mere abstraction and a shadow, except in so far as an humble use of outward requirements affords scope for its exercise. Thus, the living Church

* Acts v. 31.

is the never-ending exhibition of the doctrine of the Incarnation ; and the material place of worship in which Christians assemble, is a witness for that distinct holiness, and that conspicuous reverence, without which heaven would be a hell, and the radiant effulgence of the Divine Presence none other than a curse ! The sanctity of the House of GOD, and the reverence to be observed therein, is endangered in a rationalistic age, because such an age can brook no check to its licentiousness ; but he is no true disciple of the MASTER who drove out the money-changers,* who regards the sanctity of our Houses of Prayer as a mere speculative question.

There is no consideration so eminently practical as this :—that GOD is, for specified purposes, more immediately present in some places than others. In what other way could we be so constantly, or so effectually reminded of the distinction between earth and heaven, or of the preparation we must make, if we would enter into HIS Presence, before WHOM angels bow in adoration, and to approach WHOM the sera-

* Matthew xxi. 12.

phim and cherubim have wings, wherewith they may veil their faces!*

Our Churches serve to give us a perception of the fact, that there is a Presence of GOD different from that of which the Psalmist speaks, when he tells, in language suited to the subject, of the utter impossibility of going where HE is not.†

When once we have realized that certain edifices are more peculiarly than others the houses in which GOD has HIS habitation, and the places where HIS Honour dwells, we learn to place a restraint upon our demeanour when in those places, to which we do not subject ourselves elsewhere. And thus we are early taught to know, that, when near GOD, we must take the shoes from off our feet, since the place whereon we stand is holy ground.‡

Think not to say that GOD dwells not in our Christian Churches, because no visible Shechinah portrays HIS glory; nor that HIS Honour fails to dwell therein, because no material ark enshrines the symbols of HIS covenants. Are there not solemnized in our Churches the realities, of which in the Jewish Temple

* Isaiah vi. 2.

† Psalm cxxxix. 1-12.

‡ Exodus iii. 5.

only the figure was celebrated? Did their Altar teem with the blood of an emblematic sacrifice? and shall ours be esteemed of less value and honour, because on it is offered the unbloody commemoration of that Great Atonement, to which they looked forward in hope, and upon which we look back with thankfulness? Did their Temple receive character, from the fact that the Glory of the LORD filled the House of the LORD?* and shall our Churches be wanting in reverential treatment, when it is remembered that they are the especial scenes in which is fulfilled the last gracious promise of the REDEEMER,—“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world?”† For, is it not within their sacred territory that the Holy Eucharist is commonly celebrated? and is it not in that Holy Ordinance, that this gracious promise of the SAVIOUR is more especially fulfilled? For, since it cannot be duly celebrated without that Priesthood in which HIS authority is handed on, so is it valueless, unless in it there be a real communication of HIMSELF to the soul of the communicant. The Sacrament is, in

* 1 Kings viii. 11.

† Matthew xxviii. 20.

truth, nothing, unless, in the words of our Service, it be that we are therein “made one with CHRIST, and HE one with us.” And surely the spot in which this mystical incorporation into the very nature of the GODHEAD is ordinarily and commonly celebrated, cannot be, to the thoughtful mind, a spot which can fail in evoking awe and commanding reverence. And if, with the Psalmist, we have loved the habitation of GOD’S House, and, with him, loved the place where HIS Honour dwelleth ; then, when in it, we shall assuredly mingle awe with our love, and seek with diligence, and obey with alacrity, those directions with which competent authority may supply us, for our behaviour within so divine a place, and in so sacred a spot.

And, to members of the Church of England, the decision of competent authority in these matters, is to be found in those directions preceding the several prayers, &c., which, from their being formerly printed in red, are called after the Latin word for red, Rubrics ; and in those constitutions and canons ecclesiastical, which are binding upon us by the law of the Church and of the State. It were much to be wished that men would remember, that, as the

enlisted soldiers of the Cross, they are bound to observe the discipline of their Christian service, and that they can never hope to make an effective onslaught upon the world, until they present an united front. Let it be ours, brethren, to endeavour to pay a scrupulous regard to matters, which, although minute in themselves, are yet parts of a system admirably adapted to shelter the principle of Christian life within us, from the rude attacks of the unbeliever, and the palsy touch of indifference. Every outward act of devotion is a witness for GOD and HIS CHRIST; and every testimony which we are enabled to bear for HIS truth, is an obedience which HE will reward, by giving us more knowledge here,* and more glory hereafter. Let us disprove the charge of formalism, not by breaking through all forms, but by throwing into their observance a living and hearty cheerfulness, a sober zeal, and an unaffected earnestness, which shall place our sincerity beyond suspicion, and qualify us to invite the favour and blessing of our GREAT HEAD, who will not pronounce a less woe from heaven

* John vii. 17.

than HE uttered on earth, against those hypocrites, who wash and make clean the outside of the platter, but within are full of all manner of uncleanness;* who, though they are lambs in clothing, are wolves in temper.† No, brethren, let it be yours so to discipline your bodies, that they may be the seemly vessels, filled with the incense of a living devotion. It will be in vain to beautify and garnish them, if they are the sepulchres, instead of the temples of piety.

Truth and soberness are averse from extremes; and, as it is possible to fall into irreverence, from lack of forms, so is it possible to be drawn into superstition, from their indiscriminate abundance. Our danger has for many years, come not from the latter, but the former of these quarters: for the practice of too many Churchmen, has been as little guided by rule, in the matter of outward reverence, as if they were members of a community, whose first law was, that every man should do that which is right in his own eyes.‡ To go into too many of our churches, one would think that the Church

* Matthew xxiii. 25-27. † Matthew vii. 15.

‡ Deuteronomy xii. 8.

of England had made no settled provision for uniformity of posture, or significance of ceremonial. But, GOD be praised, a happier day is dawning, and we may look forward with trust to the arrival of that time, when the Palace of the KING of Kings shall not be the only arena upon which men shall presume to set at nought the requirements of ceremony. There are, alas! too many, who, while they would be the most punctilious of the punctilious in observing the forms of presentation at an earthly court, yet so far forget the allegiance they owe to their GOD, as to withhold from HIS service those outward tokens of respect, which the Church has agreed upon, as the proper index of those feelings with which we should worship the Church's LORD. Is it not sad to see persons thoughtlessly sitting in a lolling posture, when the Ambassador of the KING of Kings, is pronouncing in his MASTER'S name, pardon or blessing? Does the earthly subject kneel to receive a boon of his earthly sovereign, and shall he forbear a like expression of humility, when it is eternal homage which he is paying, and eternal blessing which he is receiving? I speak not here of those, who, from age or in-

firmity, cannot bear the irksomeness] of this posture. GOD will not judge such according to what they have not.* But what shall be said for those who have no sort of excuse for setting at nought the directions of the Church in these various respects, but their own wilfulness? And of these the number is still too great, though we have good ground for believing that it is continually decreasing, and that the spirit which animated our pious forefathers is reviving in their sons. Let us seek to tread in their steps and imbibe their spirit, that it may no longer be said :

Seven times a day, *on bended knee*,
They to their SAVIOUR cried : and we—
One hour we find, in seven long days,
Before our God to *sit* and *gaze*.†

You have before you a copy of the Eighteenth Canon, which is entitled, “ A Reverence and Attention to be used within the Church at the time of Divine Service;” and I pray your attention to it, not only while I enumerate some of its provisions, but in your general conduct during Divine Service, whenever, as worms of

* 2 Corinthians viii. 12.

† Lyra Apostolica.

the dust, we exercise our great privilege of drawing nigh to worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.* I heard very recently of the effect produced upon the mind of a poor person, not in the habit of frequenting the Church's sanctuaries, by the order and decency she observed in the worship of this congregation: but while I thankfully acknowledge that there are many who think it their chiefest delight to do as the Church requires, there are others who fall far short of her rules in this respect. In the Canon just mentioned, it is ordered, that "All manner of persons then present shall reverently kneel upon their knees, when the general Confession, Litany, and other Prayers are read; and shall stand up at the saying of the Belief, according to the rules in that behalf prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer." These directions are so obvious in their fitness, as to render lengthened comment unnecessary. Surely, confession of sins, deprecation of wrath, and supplication of pardon, are matters in which the devout mind should seek out, not the *least*, but the *most* humble postures: and in like

* 1 Chronicles xvi. 29.

manner, although the priest then stands, as in the performance of an authoritative act, the people are wisely ordered to remain still kneeling, while they receive, if truly penitent, GOD'S absolution and pardon. But to return to the Canon: "And likewise, when in time of Divine Service the LORD JESUS shall be mentioned, due and lowly reverence shall be done by all persons present, as it hath been accustomed; testifying by these outward ceremonies and gestures, their inward humility, Christian resolution, and due acknowledgment that the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the true eternal SON of GOD, is the only SAVIOUR of the world, in WHOM alone all the mercies, graces, and promises of mankind, for this life, and the life to come, are fully and wholly comprised."

It is not easy to conceive how this most seemly direction has fallen into disuse in most parts of the service, and yet been retained in the Creed. Let it be ours to restore this practice, testifying, whenever we use the name of His humanity, that we recognize the DIVINITY of the son of Mary. Independently of the grounds upon which its observance is urged in the canon, it serves this lesser advantage, that,

we are, by its constant recurrence, recalled from inattention, and preserved from that listlessness which will, in spite of ourselves, so often steal over us. And, as I have observed in a former lecture, every protection against ourselves is of value.

The importance and comeliness of the following directions are such as at once commend themselves to a well-regulated mind : “ None, either man, woman, or child, of what calling soever, shall be otherwise at such times busied in the church, than in quiet attendance to hear, mark, and understand that which is read, preached, or ministered ; saying, in their due places audibly with the minister, the Confession, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Creed ; and making such other answers to the public prayers, as are appointed in the Book of Common Prayer.” The antiphonal and joint worship laid down in the Prayer Book is a most beautiful provision, alike for the harmony of the service, and the benefit of those who solemnize it. Our Prayer Book recognizes no lay deputy by whom the portion of the service appointed for the people should be performed ; and it is not possible to imagine a more delightful sound

than the simultaneous unison of the voices of a whole congregation, bent on doing acceptable homage to their great Master. People cannot sufficiently consider the inestimable value and efficacy of joint prayer, or, accepting the first summons to accompany the minister with "pure hearts and humble voices to the throne of the heavenly grace," they would exercise throughout the service their enlightened privilege of response and of saying Amen, at the priest's giving of thanks.* It is to be remembered that the Confession is to be said *after* the minister; the Lord's Prayer *with* him; but in this, as in other matters, all that is required in the solemnization of the daily Morning and Evening Service is so clearly laid down in the Prayer Book, that there need be no want of uniformity, if only we will attend to its rubrics. There is, indeed, one exception to this, in the case of the rubric preceding the salutation between priest and people which follows the Creed. The words "the minister *first* pronouncing" being by some understood to direct that the people are to kneel at once, and that he is not to

* 1 Corinthians xiv. 16.

kneel until after he has said, "Let us pray;" others hold that neither people nor priest are to kneel until that time. Much may be said on both sides; but either would be better than that general confusion in which these words are often lost. Although rather inclining to take the first of these views, yet, in a matter of doubt, it is best to follow received usage, and, as such seems to have been the practice in this congregation, I would request you to remain in a standing posture until you have made the response "And with thy Spirit," and wait for the summons "Let us pray" as the signal to kneel. It is unseemly to lose even a word of Divine Service through confusion.

It yet remains for me to speak of the wisdom of the Church's provision for the commencement of Divine Service as bearing upon our present subject; but this I must do in a separate lecture. Let me, however, in conclusion, urge upon you a strict attention to the Rubrics and the Canon, from which I have been quoting, and request you to remember that your part in Divine Service is as essential as ours, and that we are not directed to proceed, if you omit to observe the portions set out for you. Order is

heaven's first law ; and decency, becoming as it is at all times, is especially to be exacted from us in Divine Service, when, all weak and sinning as we are, we come to the throne of grace. that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

* Hebrews iv. 16.

LECTURE VII.

BEHAVIOUR IN CHURCH.

PART. II.

PSALM XXVI. 8.

*LORD, I have loved the habitation of THINE
house, and the place where THINE Honour
dwelleth.*

HAVING in my last lecture spoken of the sanctity of the house of the LORD, and urged upon you the duty and the advantages of showing your love for the place where HIS honour dwelleth, by a faithful compliance with the directions of the Rubrics and Canons of the Church, I now proceed to show, as bearing upon the same subject, the wisdom of the Church's provision for the commencement of Divine Service.

In the first book of King Edward VI, the

service commenced with the Lord's Prayer; but, on the occasion of the subsequent review of the Prayer Book, the Sentences, Exhortation, Confession, and Absolution, were deemed fit preparatives for the right exercise of the privilege of crying Abba Father,* in the words which HIS only-begotten SON hath taught us.

Let us consider these preparatives in their order.

First, at the beginning of Morning Prayer, the minister shall read with a loud voice one or more of these sentences of *the Scriptures that follow.*" Here we may remark that the term minister, as also all those other titles by which the clergy are designated in Holy Scripture and the Prayer Book, implies a commission in the person who exercises its functions. Thus, Apostle means sent: an Ambassador implies an authority to act in behalf of a King: Bishop implies authority to take the oversight: Messenger implies authority from the person whose message is conveyed: Steward there can be none, unless a Lord of the household have commissioned one: Minister, in like manner, points

* Romans viii. 15.

to an authorized action. And yet, in spite of all these things, there are those who take this honour unto themselves, without having been called as was Aaron,* *i. e.* outwardly and mediately by the hand of an authorized servant of the Most High, such as Moses was. The injunction that the minister shall read these sentences with a loud voice, implies that the attention of the congregation should now be arrested and occupied; for, as it is the duty of the clergy to remember what a solemn action they are now about to join in with their respective congregations, so also it is the duty of the congregations to consider that, during the reading of these sentences and the following exhortation, they must not think themselves at liberty to be idle, as if they had nothing to do while the minister is reading. No, my brethren, if it is our place to read these Sentences and this exhortation, it is equally yours to listen. In the reading of the sentences, you are to give a reverent attention, that you may hear the voice of GOD HIMSELF, and you are to do the like during the reading of the exhortation,

* Hebrews v. 4.

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as listening to the voice of His ambassador, and thus shall you attune your hearts to make your humble confession of your sins before Almighty God. And, in order that you may be in the fitting condition to pay this attention, make it your business to be early in GOD'S House of Prayer, to come thither some reasonable time before the commencement of Divine Service, that so your minds may acquire some of that solemn and devotional feeling which the Palace of the King of kings, the Sanctuary of the High Priest of our Profession,* the place where God's honour dwelleth, is so well calculated to inspire. Keep thy foot when thou comest to the House of GOD,† saith the wise man, and the humble child of the Church will always be careful not to enter rashly into the presence of the great I AM. Caution and reverence will mark his approach and entrance into church, and his first impulse, on reaching his accustomed place, will be to kneel down and ask GOD to hallow still more his already sobered feelings. He will then remain in peaceful contemplation of his privileges as a member of CHRIST, until

* Hebrews iii. 1.

† Eccles. v. 1.

the attitude and voice of God's minister summon him to stand up and hear these premonitory sentences of GOD'S Word. It is a high favour to be admitted to have familiar converse with the King of kings, and a great privilege to have so frequent access to the fountain of all goodness; but then it is difficult as well as lovely, and requires so much attention and serenity, zeal and vigour, faith and love, reverence and humility, that it is never so likely to be well done, or so kindly accepted, as when it is used after due preparation; for these souls of ours are so clogged with corruptions, disturbed with passion, and so constantly occupied with the vanities with which our senses present us, that we find our minds weighed down when we would lift them up to GOD; and, as those birds whose wings are not proportionable to the weight of their bodies, usually run some paces on the ground before they begin their flight, so doth the Church direct us to prepare ourselves before we begin to pray.* The Jews are taught, when they enter their synagogues, to remain silently in a praying posture before they commence their devotions. The primitive

* Cf. Dean Comber.

Christians had a preface to their prayers as long ago as the time of the famous Bishop of Carthage, St. Cyprian. We are appointed to exercise our souls in the meditation of these sentences of Holy Scripture with the exhortation subjoined, that we may become thereby more fit to pray. The famous heathen temple had inscribed over its portal in letters of gold the Greek apophthegm signifying *Know thyself*, that so the worshippers might not without due consideration approach the presence of their supposed deities. And surely, whatever might be the case of those primitive Christians, whose whole life was one continued sacrament, so to speak, it is well for us, filled with the cares of life, when we worship the one True GOD, to reflect upon the vast disproportion between ourselves and HIM, to remember that it is as great as between infinite and finite, between pure and impure, and thus to convince ourselves of the necessity of being most lowly and reverent before HIM. The frailties of our bodies, the imperfections of our souls, the irregularities of our minds, and the waywardness of our wills; the defects of our faculties, and the misery which cleaves to both soul and body, all demand the most unfeigned humility in the sight

of GOD. But that which should lay us the lowest in our own thoughts, is the remembrance of our sins ; for it is our sins which alienate us from GOD, for HE that pitieth our miseries hateth our sins, and HE that caused the leper to be banished out of the city* admitted the lame man to the beautiful gate of the temple.† Joshua himself could not be heard until the sin of Israel was taken away, and he is checked in his devotion for presuming to pray until Achan and the accursed thing be cast out.‡ Wherefore the Church, your spiritual guide, presents you with these admonitions to repentance before you begin to pray, lest you should stumble at the very threshold, and, remaining impenitent, pray in vain ; for, as the Psalmist says, “ If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me ;”§ and Isaiah declares, “ Your iniquities have separated between you and your GOD, and your sins have hid HIS face from you that HE will not hear.|| Yea, our LORD HIMSELF tells us that there is a moral impossibility

* Leviticus xiii. 45-46.

† Acts iii. 2.

‡ Joshua vii. 10-15.

§ Psalm lxvi. 18.

|| Isaiah lix. 2.

such prayers should prevail, since "GOD heareth not sinners; but, if any man be a worshipper of GOD and doeth HIS will, him HE heareth."* The petitions of impenitent sinners are necessarily either a heap of contradictions, or a web of indignities against the GOD of Heaven; for such men bewail with their mouths what they love in their hearts, and ask forgiveness when they do not feel to have offended, and when they will not own the pardon as a favour: they accuse themselves for what they did willingly and without subsequent condemnation of themselves, and which they are ready to do again on the first opportunity: they pray for things that they are constrained to hope HE will not give, and, if they do really ask anything in earnest, the thing sought is either mean and inconsiderable, or they seek it from some sinister motives, and so their prayers become a provocation. Now can an all-seeing GOD observe all this without indignation? Will not an ALMIGHTY hand be lifted up to destroy those who both delude themselves and mock the KING OF GLORY? And therefore,

* John ix. 31.

lest we should first awake to a consciousness of this guilt when we have made sure of our eternal ruin, our Mother calls us to a serious repentance, which will be the best harbinger of all our petitions ; for, if we see our sins, and feel their weight, and acknowledge their heinousness, we shall (it is to be hoped), draw near the footstool of mercy with low apprehensions of ourselves, and strong desires after GOD, with a lofty opinion of HIS mighty excellences, and with hearty love for HIS gracious goodness, with many fears and yet full of hope. And what state can be more suited to prayer than this ? How shall we better hope our prayers to wing their way to heaven, than when the faith which is to bear them thither has been purified from the dross of pride and sin, by humiliation and repentance, made efficacious through the blood and all-prevailing intercession of our glorious Redeemer ? And in order that we may the better dispose ourselves after this fashion, GOD is made to speak to us in sundry places of Holy Scripture. It was the voice of the Lord in the garden* which brought our

* Genesis iii. 8.

first parent to repentance, and shall it not have the same effect upon us? Who shall dare to refuse when HE invites, who can pardon or punish, save or destroy? Thus HE first began to speak to us in HIS Word to whom we are about to speak in our prayers, and, if we would have HIM hear our prayers, we must first listen to HIS Word, especially when there is to be found in these prefatory sentences, these preparatory exhortations to repentance from the mouth of GOD HIMSELF, so much that is accurately suited to our own condition. And, although the Scriptures are divine in every part, yet Dean Comber does not assert too much of these sentences, when he says, "I may say they are the plainest and most pertinent that can be found in the whole Book of GOD, which, though it be divine in every part, yet that care is well bestowed which selecteth such points as are suitable to the occasion;" and thus the reverend Composers of the Liturgy, like skilful physicians, have walked in this garden of GOD, which is stored with remedies of all kinds, and have gathered the choicest and most useful, different in operation, but having the same effect, viz. to bring us to repentance. They

have chosen several, yet they leave it to the discretion of future physicians of souls to use such a sentence every day as may best suit their people's hearts. And in this, our wise-hearted Reformers have shown their usual discretion, both because of the various dispositions of men's minds and also of the different temper of the same man at different times; some are ignorant, others negligent, some obdurate, some tender; some are confident, others fearful, and that which will prick a man to his heart to-day, will leave him unscathed to-morrow; that which will now cure the wound, will another time be found inefficacious either to abate its pain or remove its poison. And it therefore it may conduce to your profit, if I now proceed to classify them, and see what kind of persons they are severally intended for; so that if you come, as is your duty, before the service begin, you may occupy your time with meditating on the passage most suited to your present disposition, and most calculated to make you pray with heart, understanding, and spirit.* These sentences, then, may be

* 1 Corinthians xiv. 15.

looked upon as containing support for the fearful, comfort for the doubtful, instruction to the ignorant, admonition to the negligent, and caution to the formal. The Sentences are eleven in number. The first and last may be considered as instruction to the ignorant. From these two verses may be gained that spiritual eye-salve which the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans is counselled to obtain for the lukewarm members of the Church in that city.* And, alas! how many are there among us who are thus lukewarm in matters affecting our spiritual condition! We are therefore admonished that it is only by turning away from his sins that the wicked man may obtain pardon;† and that all are wicked men, since, if any say that he has no sin, he has not truth in his inward parts.‡ The second and eighth Sentences contain an admonition to the negligent,—*i.e.* to those who know it to be their duty to repent, and yet from day to day neglect it, and have more need to be excited than instructed; and, for this purpose, there is here provided for us a

* Revelation iii. 18.

† Ezekiel xviii. 27.

‡ 1 John i. 8-9.

cogent example;—"I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me,"* and a strict command, accompanied with a powerful motive to obedience; "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."† The third, seventh, and tenth, are intended to afford support to the fearful, and are designed to prevent that excessive dread of GOD'S wrath, which hinders the exercise of devotion by too much dejecting the spirits. Such persons may be taught by David and Jeremiah not to run *from* the ALMIGHTY, but to pray to HIM more humbly and earnestly. "Hide THY face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities."‡ "O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in THINE anger, lest THOU bring me to nothing."§ "Enter not into judgment with THY servant, O LORD; for in THY sight shall no man living be justified."|| The fourth, sixth, and ninth, convey comfort to the doubtful; to those who doubt of GOD'S favour, and, in despair, look upon HIM as irreconcilable. To strengthen their faith in GOD'S mercy, the Church here provides three sentences for them,

* Psalm li. 3.

† Matthew iii. 2.

‡ Psalm li. 9.

§ Jeremiah x. 24.

. || Psalm cxliii. 2.

the first to show, how fit they are to ask pardon: "The sacrifices of GOD are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O GOD, THOU wilt not despise;"* the other two declare how likely GOD is to pardon them on their repentance: "To the LORD our GOD belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against HIM; neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our GOD, to walk in HIS laws which HE set before us."† "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."‡ The fifth sentence is a caution to the formal; to those who, by custom, grow cold; confessing their sins with external reverence only, without any sincere devotion. These are here presented by the Church with that direction and reproof which GOD gave to the hypocritical Jews:—"Rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your GOD; for HE is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth HIM of the evil."

* Psalm li. 17.

† Daniel ix. 9-10.

‡ Luke xv. 18-19.

§ Joel ii. 13.

Thus we see how wisely and effectually the Church prepares the way to the throne of grace for the various descriptions of character which may be supposed to assemble within her courts for the purposes of devotion. Let us learn to be thankful for these encouragements, admonitions, and instructions ; and may it be our earnest desire so to use the ordinances of GOD'S house as not to abuse them ; to show our reverence for the habitation of GOD'S house, and the place where HIS honour dwelleth, by following out the design of our Holy Mother in furnishing us with these sentences. " Let us," in the language of our first Homily, " hear, read, and know, these holy rules, injunctions, and statutes of our Christian religion, and upon that we have made profession to GOD at our baptism ; let us with fear and reverence lay up in the chest of our hearts these necessary and fruitful lessons ; let us night and day muse, and have meditation and contemplation in them. Psalm. i. Let us ruminate, and, as it were, chew the cud, that we may have the sweet juice, spiritual effect, marrow, honey, kernel, taste, comfort, and consolation of them."*

* Homily on Holy Scripture, part 2.

Thus, my brethren, shall we fitly prepare ourselves to approach our God, with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart; and we have His blessed assurance that every one that *so* asketh receiveth, and he that *so* seeketh findeth; and to him that *so* knocketh it shall be opened.*

* Matthew vii. 8.

LECTURE VIII.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE HOLY COMMUNION.

PSALM L. 14.

*Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows
unto the Most Highest.*

THE Psalm in which these words occur, and in which we have just been joining, is a solemn magnifying of God's power and majesty, a description of the calling of the Gentiles, and of the manner in which it would please God to be worshipped under the Gospel dispensation. It was composed, probably by David, and appointed to be sung by Asaph, a Levite, chosen by David to attend the ark, and to thank and to praise upon cymbals the LORD GOD of Israel. It opens with a declaration of God's gracious purpose to gather the whole nation of the Jews,

from Dan even to Beersheba, from sea to sea, from east to west, to reduce and take them off from their hypocritical ways, and to bring them to the due acknowledgment and pure worship of the true GOD and the practice of all virtue. To this end, as GOD had fixed HIS tabernacle on Mount Sion, and manifested HIS presence there with the power it aforetime had on Sinai, so it is here foretold that the SON of GOD, in the fulness of time, should descend to this earth of ours ; that the true light should shine forth ; that the Messiah should be born of our flesh, of the seed of David, and, that, (having preached repentance to the Jews, and been rejected of the Sanhedrim, and crucified by them), HE should rise again from death, and ascend to HIS Father, and then send HIS Spirit on his Apostles, thereby commissioning them to reveal HIS Gospel to all the world, beginning from the place where GOD had pleased in a more especial manner to have HIS dwelling, — the most beautiful Mount of Sion. There HE then manifested HIMSELF, and from thence it is declared HE should shine forth and enlighten the heathen world ; from thence should the preaching of HIS Gospel commence and proceed ; and,

having set forth the terrible manner of GOD's coming to judge HIS apostate people, described the assembly to be present, and HIS appeal to men and angels, the Psalmist announces GOD's intention to establish a new law with the faithful disciples of Christ, abolishing the old Mosaic method of sacrifices and holocausts of bullocks constantly offered up to GOD by the Jews ; he declares the intention of the Almighty never any more to expect of the worshipper such a service, (for, indeed, it had never received HIS sanction, as one of which HE had any need, or in which HE took any pleasure for its own sake), if HE had, HE here declares HIS power to provide HIMSELF with whole hecatombs without putting the Israelites to the charge or trouble of it, having the plenary dominion of all the cattle on the earth and fowls of the air, and the certain knowledge where every one of them has its dwelling ; so that HE could readily command any or all of them whensoever HE pleased. But it is infinitely beneath even our conceptions of the Divine Nature, that HE should want or make use of any such description of oblations ; for HE feeds not on flesh as is our case. HE had other ends in

view in commanding the Jews to solemnize these services, viz. that they might thereby adumbrate the death of HIS SON, as the one true means of redemption and propitiation for sin, and also the more spiritual sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving, and alms to the poor members of CHRIST, and for the general efficiency of HIS Church, in which way our fellows may receive a real benefit, a thing which cannot be predicated or imagined of the MAKER of all things. And such are the sacrifices which are expected and required of us as Christians. It is to ourselves that the words of the text most closely apply ; it is we who are to offer unto GOD thanksgiving, and to pay our vows unto the MOST HIGHEST ; for herein is implied that sacrifice of the Eucharist, which it is our great privilege to celebrate in blessing GOD for all HIS mercies, but especially for the gift of HIS SON to die for us ; and this must be brought to GOD with penitent, contrite, mortified hearts, with firm resolves of a new and sincere obedience, and must be constantly attended by an offertory, or liberal contribution for the temporal and spiritual uses of the Church, proportionable to the voluntary oblations among the Jews :

and these being really dedicated to GOD, in a proper and becoming spirit, will be accepted of HIM, and blessed to us.

Let it, therefore, be our present business to determine the specific duties of our Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, and the manner of their observance, as prescribed in the Order of the Administration of the LORD'S Supper, or Holy Communion, as we find it set forth in our Book of Common Prayer.

And I may first remark, that this service, like all the others, takes for granted the presence of a certain frame of mind and heart in those who join in it. It is not a service for conversion, but for edification. It can only be rightly joined in by those, who, having been baptized, are either confirmed, or ready and desirous to be so* at the first opportunity, and who are striving, day by day, to possess the same mind which was in CHRIST JESUS.† It is a service for the faithful penitent, who, being in perfect charity with all men, is desirous of being assured of GOD'S favour, and of receiving

* Rubric at the end of the Confirmation Office.

† Phillipians ii. 5.

fresh supplies of HIS grace. None who are persisting in wilful sin, or in determined neglect of known duties, are qualified for the reception of grace in this Sacrament ; and they will only increase their own condemnation,* if they think to approach the holy Altar of commemorative sacrifice with the impure offering of an impenitent life. But, on the other hand, none should refuse to come, who are really desirous of heaven, and who have made diligent search into their ways, measuring and checking them by the life of CHRIST ; and whose consciences, enlightened by GOD'S Word, and sharpened by HIS Spirit, have a ready perception of the hidden power of CHRIST'S Passion, and judge of the fitness and lawfulness of every pursuit, by its facility of combination with that life which is the only spiritual reality the world ever saw. The use of the Cross was retained in Holy Baptism, that we might not be ashamed of our Christian profession to die daily with CHRIST ; and it is no inapt allegory, which gives to that symbol of our REDEEMER'S Passion, the talismanic property of casting a shadow on all

* 1 Corinthians xi. 29.

things which may be lawfully done. Certain it is, that he who has ever in his mind the Cross of CHRIST, measuring his every action by the life of HIM who suffered thereon, cannot be guilty of any considerable deviation from the law of GOD. Imperfections will attach to his holiest things, but the conveyance of GOD's pardon, upon the hearty confession of the penitent, conscious of his own unworthiness, shall from time to time renew, and spiritualize, and sanctify our hearts. And thus, for the right celebration of the Holy Communion, there is no such sure preparation as a humble and contrite spirit, which is ever dreading lest it should be unworthy to eat of the children's bread.*

It will perhaps be objected to this view, that if the previous preparation of humiliation and penitence, were required in those who go up to the courts of the LORD's House, to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and to pay their vows to the MOST HIGHEST, then the confession, which stands in the very threshold of our service, and the absolution, by which it is followed, being respectively the expression of a sinner's

* Matthew xv. 26.

feelings, and the cleansing that a sinner needs, would not be required. There does not seem to be the slightest warrant for such a view. "In former days, the priest had used to stand in the porch of the church, and to sprinkle the worshippers with water as they entered, which was intended as a form of absolution, an anti-type of the washings of the priests of GOD's elder Church in the sea of brass, before they entered the holy place." The preparatory sentences, exhortation, confession, and absolution, are just an embodiment in language of that which the act of sprinkling represented in a different way: the worshipper was expected to come up to GOD's House in a state of penitency, conscious of his short-comings, and secretly confessing his unworthiness to tread GOD's courts, yet full of eagerness to do so; and the sprinkling symbolized the language of absolution, Be thou clean,* by which the barrier was removed. On good and sufficient reasons, the present form was substituted for the act of sprinkling; and neither the confession nor the absolution is any warrant to impenitent sinners

* Matthew viii. 3.

to take their seat in the Presence Chamber of the HOLY ONE, nor were they ever intended to sanction such a practice. To whom is the exhortation addressed? To "Dearly beloved *brethren*." And what is the first sentence of the Confession? "We have erred and strayed from THY *ways* like lost *sheep*." It is not, then, the confession of wolves, seeking a change of nature, but of sheep, wanting forgiveness for having offended by straying. And who are the persons to whom the Absolution is restricted? "ALMIGHTY GOD hath given power and commandment to HIS Ministers to declare and pronounce to HIS *people*, being penitent." But it will be said, the language of the Confession is strong and unqualified. True: and is there any self-abasement equal to that of an affectionate son, who has detected himself in undutiful conduct? And is there any penitence so deep as that of the honoured servant, who is convicted of short-coming and unfaithfulness? And yet there is a sobriety along with the depth of humiliation, and a certain measuredness of language, which would ill become the awakened sinner, whose Litany is made up of very few sentences, such as, What must I do to be

saved,* GOD be merciful to me a sinner,† LORD save me.‡ And as this is true of the ordinary sacrifice of Prayer and Praise, so is it especially true of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, wherein we show forth the LORD's death until HE come, and where we make an oblation of our whole selves upon the Altar of HIS service. We must not draw nigh to the Holy Table with the presumptuous hope of being awakened and converted there, but we must bring with us feelings of humble penitence, strong faith, and fervent charity; and possessing these, we may reverently regard our participation of this Holy Ordinance, as the communication of the Body and Blood of CHRIST to our souls, and be assured that we are herein made one with CHRIST, and HE one with us.§

The whole Communion office consists of four parts. First, a more general preparation to the Communion, which is either common to the whole congregation, in the exercise—1. Of repentance; by the LORD's Prayer, the Collect

* Acts xvi. 30.

† Luke xviii. 13:

‡ Matthew xiv. 30.

§ Cf. Sermons for the Times, No. II.

for Purity, and the Ten Commandments. 2. Of Holy Decrees; by the Collects for the King, and for the day. 3. Of Obedience; by the hearing of the Epistle and Gospel. 4. Of Faith; by repeating the Creed. 5. Of Charity; by the Offertory, and the Prayer for the Holy Catholic Church. Or else this general preparation is proper to those who ought to communicate, namely, the warning before Communion, and exhortation to it. Secondly, there is the more immediate preparation contained—1. In the proper instructions in the exhortation to the Communion, and the immediate invitation. 2. In the form of acknowledging our offences in the Confession. 3. In the means of ensuring our pardon by the Sentences, and the conveyance of it in the Absolution. And, 4. In the exciting our love and gratitude in the preface and the hymn called Trisagion. Thirdly, there is the celebration of the mystery, consisting of—1. The communicant's humble approach in the Address. 2. The Priest's blessing the elements in the Prayer of Consecration. And, 3. His distribution of them according to the form of administration. Lastly, there is the Post Communion, containing—1. Prayers and vows, in

the LORD's Prayer, and the first and second prayers after the Communion. 2. Praises and thanksgivings in the *Gloria in Excelsis*. And, 3. The dismissal, by the final blessing.

Let us now proceed to consider our more particular and minute duties in the solemnization of this office. Throughout, the officiating Priest for the most part stands, the exceptions being in the two Confessions, and in his own reception of the Holy Communion. On the other hand, the people are for the most part to kneel, the exceptions being during the reading of the Epistle, when they sit, and of the Gospel, the Creed, the Offertory, the Exhortation, and the *Gloria in Excelsis*, when they should stand. These latter customs are rather traditionary than actually embodied in the Prayer Book, and the absence of directions in the Rubrics of this office, as express as we find in other parts of the Prayer Book, may be accounted for by the fact that this office has, from the existence of the gross error of transubstantiation in the Roman Church, undergone more changes than any other part of our service book; and in consequence of omitting a prayer here, and changing the place of another there, the Rubric

belonging to the portion whose position had been altered, has been omitted, or a new Rubric not formed for the new Collect, which was then inserted.

The standing attitude of the Priest is that of the ancient Church, by whom it was probably borrowed from the service of the Temple, where the legal sacrifices were offered by the priest standing. Between the legal and evangelical sacrifices, there is the same correspondence that exists between the shadow and the substance. The Christian Priest offers the incense of prayers, praises, and alms,—the oblation of ourselves, our souls, and bodies, and the memorial of the sacrifice of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.* At the Confession, and the Collect before the Prayer of Consecration, which form no part of the oblation, he kneels. In the former he confesses his own sins, as well as the sins of the people, and in the latter he acknowledges his and their unworthiness to approach the LORD'S Table. And he receives the Communion kneeling, because that is the posture prescribed by the Church of England to all that communicate.

* Revelation xiii. 8.

There does not seem to be any sufficient authority for the priest saying, the LORD's Prayer in this office, alone ; the direction being that it is to be said after the minister, wheresoever used in Divine Service : but the absence of a rubric, which occurs in the other instances, is certainly calculated to leave a doubt on the subject. During the rehearsing of the commandments, a devout self-examination should take place, and all attention should be paid to the well selected portions of Scripture appointed for the Epistle and Gospel, and then the Creed becomes a fitting exercise of our faith. The Creed is appointed to be sung or said, in which regulation the usage of GOD's Church in the earliest times is observed ; and the exhortations and instructions of GOD's ministers follow the lessons from Holy Scripture. These instructions may be divided into four parts, according to the ancient practice of the Church of England :—1. The announcement of Feasts or Holy Days, and of the administration of the Communion. 2. The publication of Excommunications and other ecclesiastical acts. 3. The Bidding Prayer preparatory to the sermon. And 4. The Sermon or Homily.

The sermon ended, the Priest is to return to the LORD's table and begin the Offertory. There can be no doubt that, since the Apostolic age, it has been the universal custom of Christians to offer alms and oblations to the glory of GOD. Charity may be expressed three ways, for each of which this office contains suitable directions: by *giving*, in the Sentences; by *praying*, in the Prayer for the Church Militant; and by *forgiving*, in the general warning. We read in John xiii. 29, that CHRIST gave HIS alms at the Pass-over, and from Matt. v. 23, we find that HE never supposes us to approach the altar without a gift. "The first Christians," says Dean Comber, "gave all they had, and those in after times dedicated large and noble oblations." And Dr. Nicholls tells us that "these offerings, in the primitive times, were so considerable, that they were divided into four portions:—one for the relief of the poor; the second the Bishop retained for his maintenance; the third was for the maintenance of the Church and ornaments; and the fourth for the clergy." And from the sentences we may safely conclude it to have been the intention of the Church, that the people should, through this channel,

contribute to the support of the clergy and the appointments of Divine Service : and there is herein clear precedent for collecting in the offertory for the general purposes of the Church at home and abroad.

If this method of giving to GOD's service were again resorted to throughout the land, and the proceeds—not required for the immediate wants of the poor of the place, and the maintenance of Divine Service—transferred to a common fund, to be under the direction and distribution of the Bishops, and such presbyters and laymen as they might call to their assistance, there would be none of those unworthy artifices of raising money by platform speeches and temporary excitement, which are now the disgrace of our common Christianity. Week by week every Christian man would lay by him in store as GOD had prospered him,* and the cry of spiritual destitution would soon be hushed. May it be ours to pray for, and hasten as far as we may, the coming of that day !†

* 1 Corinthians xvi. 2.

† See "Acceptable Sacrifices," a Sermon preached in St. John's Church, Cheltenham, by the Rev. W. Gresley,

The offertory ended, the alms and the elements—bread and wine—are then to be placed on the altar, the latter in sufficient quantities that all may communicate. Our gifts are then solemnly offered as alms and oblations to GOD in the Prayer for the Church Militant, in which we pray for the living and commemorate the dead. This prayer ended, the time for the non-communicants to withdraw is come, and those who purpose to communicate should then conveniently place themselves for the purpose.

During the exhortation the people should stand, and then meekly kneel upon their knees, remaining kneeling until the Prayer of Consecration, and then continuing in a kneeling or humble sitting posture, in strict self-examination and meditation, until they go to receive the Communion : afterwards, returning to their places to thank GOD, and again to meditate on HIS great mercies, until, when all having communicated, they join in the Post Communion, standing to give praise in the “Glory be to GOD on High,” and meekly kneeling to receive the parting

benediction. I may also venture to observe that, owing, perhaps, to a want of clear and definite rubrical directions, or from some mistake, it has been customary, in many of our churches, for the people to repeat, not only the seraphic Hymn itself, beginning, "Holy, Holy," but also a portion of the Preface, beginning at, "Therefore, with Angels." This never was the custom of the primitive Church, nor of those who revised our Liturgy, nor is it warranted by the nature of the Preface itself. It has, perhaps, arisen from the practice of printing the latter part of the Preface in connexion with the hymn, and from the indistinctness of the Rubric, which, in fact, gives no special direction for the people to join in repeating the hymn.*

I may also say that the people should stand at the ascribing of Glory to God the Father, &c. with which, following Apostolic practice, the sermon generally ends.

I am aware that all these minute details will be considered, by many, dull and unprofitable; but, as there is nothing so likely to prevent distraction as uniformity,—and our command is to

* See *Origines Liturgicæ*, by the Rev. W. Palmer, M.A.

observe decency and order,* and to worship in the beauty of holiness,†—we may afford to bear the charge, since its weight is shared by those Reformers who thought it well to put such directions in the Prayer Book, and we should not, therefore, think it too much to obey them.

And, in conclusion, when we call to mind that the Holy Communion is a Sacrament in which one thing appears and another is intended; when we remember that the outward and visible sign in the LORD'S Supper is bread and wine, which the LORD hath commanded to be received, and that the thing which does not appear, and which constitutes the ordinance a mystery, is the Body and Blood of CHRIST, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the LORD'S Supper:‡ when we remember these things, then it is that we urge the necessity of the invitation to this feast being accepted by all. Where is the man who, wilfully and of purpose, would put from himself the only sure means of realizing that happiness which is ever forming the atmosphere of heaven? There is

* 1 Corinthians xiv. 40.

† 1 Chronicles xvi. 29.

‡ Church Catechism.

nothing to impede man's participation in this holy ordinance, except he resolve to prefer sin, and to continue in the practice of ungodliness. If duly baptized and confirmed, and earnestly desirous of fulfilling the duties of your Christian calling, then upon you is there a necessity that you should obey the call to be one with CHRIST, and have CHRIST one with you.

But then, remember the danger of accepting the call, and not complying with the conditions. The mere fact of your being a communicant, will do no more for you than the mere fact of your being baptized. A formal participation in spiritual ordinances, cannot be beneficial to those who are meanwhile resigning themselves to the various calls of the three great enemies whom, by our very Baptism, we are called upon to renounce. But, if we would obtain strength to fulfil the solemn covenant then made for us, and since by ourselves renewed in Confirmation, GOD hath laid help upon ONE that is mighty,* and that strength is mercifully vouchsafed to those who humbly seek it, in the Holy Sacrament to which ye are bidden to come on Sunday next.

* Psalm lxxxix. 19.

And although it is alike the blessed privilege and the imperative duty of the Christian, to communicate on every available occasion, the one is heightened, and the other strengthened at the holy festival of Easter, of which this solemn week is the harbinger. And in the case of those who, heedless alike of privilege and duty, begin to make excuse* when they are summoned to their LORD'S Table, it is prescribed by the Church, in her Rubric, that one of the three occasions on which they are to communicate within the year, shall be the Feast of our LORD'S Resurrection.

Seeing, then, that the Holy Communion is, on this "day of days," invested with more than usual solemnity, let us prepare ourselves to come with more than usual devotion. "But I do not mean by devotion, only some transient thoughts and passions, arising at certain seasons, when we more solemnly address ourselves to GOD our SAVIOUR; but a settled love to HIM, disposing us to present HIM alway with an heart humble, pure, just, and charitable, which is the oblation that all our other sacrifices are to prepare for

* Luke xiv. 18.

HIM, and the greatest honour that we are capable to do HIM.* In this spirit let us draw near to that Holy Table, presenting (as we shall then profess to do) ourselves, our souls, and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice. Let the rich come, that their wealth may be blessed ; the poor, that their poverty may be sweetened : let those in prosperity seek grace to receive their blessings gratefully, and those in adversity to bear their afflictions meekly : and let all unite in “ praising GOD for the glorious resurrection of HIS SON JESUS CHRIST our LORD ; for HE is the very Paschal Lamb which was offered for us, and hath taken away the sin of the world ; who, by HIS death, hath destroyed Death, and by HIS rising to life again, hath restored us to everlasting life.” I bid you come on Sunday next. If you are Christians in earnest, you will communicate often ; if you are loyal children of the Church of England, you will communicate at Easter.

* Bishop Patrick's Christian Sacrifice.

LECTURE IX.

REVERENCE IN THE SANCTUARY.*

ECCLESIASTES v. 1.

*Keep thy foot when thou goest to the House of
GOD, and be more ready to hear than to give
the sacrifice of fools.*

AMONG the many advantages which accrue to a Church from the possession of a prescribed form of public service, in the vernacular of those for whose use it is intended, this is not the least : namely, that her members are thereby in possession of a sure indication of the general conduct required of them, and of the particular disposition of mind and heart which it is necessary for them to cultivate and cherish, in order that

* This Lecture should have been printed No. VI. in this series.

they may worship GOD in spirit and in truth,* and pray with an understanding heart,† and a hearty will. This proposition holds good in its measure and degree, of all religious communities, whether abiding in the doctrine and fellowship of the Apostles,‡ or deviating from either one or the other, or from both. For there is no such sure guarantee for an enlightened and conscientious reception of Scripture truths, as held by particular sections of professing Christians, as is to be found in the adoption and practice of a settled form of public service, “In the tongue understood of the people.”§ Particular dogmas may be laid up in confessions of faith, to which the teachers of the sect may be required to subscribe; but unless these confessions of the faith be simple and elementary in their form, and interwoven with a constantly recurring worship in strict unison with themselves, it is idle to hope that they will obtain any such hold upon the members of that sect at large, as shall ensure, or even invite that uniformity of action amongst themselves, as

* John iv. 24.

† Acts ii. 42.

† 1 Corinthians xiv. 15.

§ Article xxiv.

members of a religious community, in the performance of the essential duties of religion, or that agreement between their public prayers and their privately received principles and motives of action as individuals, for which it is the especial province of a settled Liturgy to provide. And if a public and authorized form of worship be so important an element in the preservation of the cardinal principles of those who use it,—and that it is so who will deny that knows the history of German Latitudinarianism, or of the Calvinistic congregations in this country, which have degenerated into Socinianism?—if, I repeat, a public and authorized form of worship be so important an element in the preservation of the cardinal principles of those who use it, it is not easy to estimate the value of that Liturgy, whose agreement in form and substance with the primitive manuals of devotion, at once attests, and helps to perpetuate in the Church by which it is adopted, an abiding continuance in the doctrine and the fellowship of the Apostles.* If a form of public service in unison with the authorita-

* Acts ii. 42.

tive professions of faith which are interwoven amongst it, be calculated to ensure the permanency of the principles involved, we of all persons should rejoice and be thankful ; for, as members of the Church of England, our professions of faith are the Three Creeds of Universal Christendom ; and we are justified in asserting, upon the grounds which I have stated in preceding lectures, that our prayers are in unison with the received belief of GOD'S people in all ages. And thus our Book of Common Prayer may be considered not only as a precious manual of devotion, in which are embodied the aspirations of GOD'S saints alike under the law and in the present ages of the Gospel,—not only as being thereby a witness of the holiness required by GOD'S service, and of the doctrines professed by the early followers of the Cross,—but as possessing, in addition to these excellencies arising out of its subject matter, this further value, resulting from its public and settled form : that opportunity is thus afforded for so realizing, in the stillness of the closet, our public professions in the worship of the sanctuary, as to bring them to bear upon our general conduct, and, at the same time, be thus enabled, by a right

appreciation of their high meaning, to throw ourselves more entirely into their relevancy and force, when, as creatures of the dust, we fall low at the footstool of Heaven, and lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, deprecate the wrath, and supplicate the pardon and favour of the BEING we have so often and so thanklessly offended. There is no antecedent difficulty in observing the command of our text, to keep our foot when we go into the House of God, and to forbear offering the sacrifice of fools, when we are in possession beforehand of the precise exercises in which we shall be then engaged, and know also that upon these exercises is set the consentient approval of the holy Church throughout the world, as that approval is to be gathered from the four Œcumenical Councils, whose decisions are the received tests of heresy in the Church of England.

In the possession of her Book of Common Prayer, the Church of England saves and protects her children from that over-wrought superstition, and that darkness of ignorance into which the Church of Rome has plunged her members, by depriving them of the privilege of joint public prayer in the language with

which they have been familiar from the cradle. And it may one day be a great question for the consideration of our chief rulers, whether the little progress which our Church has made in Ireland may not be attributed, in no small degree, to the fact, that to the native Irish, the language of the English Prayer Book is a tongue as little understood of the people as is the Latin Mass Book.* Of this we may be quite sure, that we cannot have an enlightened devotion, unless those who occupy the place of the unlearned, are in a condition to say Amen at the priest's giving of thanks;† and this they cannot be, unless the prayers, by being in a known tongue, qualify them for praying with the understanding no less than with the spirit.‡ And therefore we owe a deep debt of gratitude to Almighty God, that it pleased HIM to put it into the hearts of those our Bishops by whom our Reformation was canonically conducted, to rescue the holy language of Confessors, and Saints, and Martyrs, from the company of the

* The establishment of the Irish Collegiate Institution, is an important step in the right direction, for the remedy of this evil.

† 1 Corinthians xiv. 16.

‡ 1 Corinthians xiv. 14.

idle legends of superstitious times, and translating them into the mother tongue, to provide for the people of their charge, that their understanding should not be unfruitful.

But while, on the one hand, the Book of Common Prayer, by being in the vernacular, is our safeguard from the errors of superstition and ignorance, into which, by an unfaithful withholding of the children's bread, Rome has precipitated so many of her members ; it is, on the other, by its settled and authoritative form, a bulwark against the encroachments of that fanaticism, and a preventive of that coldness and deadness, which are the alternate fruits of a system (if dissent deserve the name) which places a congregation at the entire mercy of the particular individual who may, for the time being, chance to be their minister. Experience proclaims trumpet-tongued the mischiefs arising from the aspirations of a people being dependent upon the feelings, at a particular moment, of any one individual, however gifted, or however spiritually-minded he may be. It is too notorious to need repetition here, that among those parties who have no settled Liturgy, the prayer of the minister is little else than the

exordium of the preacher, and the fearful presumption is incurred of making an alleged address to the ALMIGHTY the vehicle of rebuking some fault, or seeking some end, which there is lacking the courage to propound in the more direct language of the sermon. But even on the supposition that there is nothing in the prayer itself that is objectionable, how can that be an hearty and understanding devotion,—how can that be a worship in spirit and truth on the part of the people, which has to be heard, understood, acquiesced in, adopted as an exponent of their own feelings, and offered as the incense of their hearts to GOD, all at once, and during the rapid flow of fresh words from the lips of some idolized Apollos?

No, brethren: let us pause, and bless GOD for our Book of Common Prayer, for this among other things, that it is a special help to the observance of those duties of frequenting the House of GOD, of being reverent when within its sacred walls, in readiness to obey what we there hear propounded to us as GOD's Will, which are enjoined upon us by the Divine preacher in the words of the text. Let us praise and bless GOD for our Book of Common Prayer, not only

for the manner in which it suberves our dutiful behaviour, when in HIS Holy House we seek to magnify HIS Holy Name, and hear HIS Holy Word, but also for this : that we have therein an indication of the general conduct required of us, and of the particular dispositions of mind and heart, which it is necessary for us to cultivate and cherish, in order that we may not, when we join in its soul-stirring strains, be offering the sacrifice of fools.

It is nothing that we deck GOD's altar with rich and costly sacrifices, unless we offer and present unto HIM in very deed and truth, "ourselves, our souls, and our bodies,"—all that we have, and all that we are. In vain shall we throng the courts of the LORD's house ; idle, and worse than idle, will be the profusion of our homage in HIS earthly palace, if we do not constantly remember, that although the KING of Kings hath HIS dwelling so high in the heaven of heavens, yet HIS eyes behold, and HIS eyelids try the children of men,* and are not thereby moved to circumspection of conduct, and heartiness of service, whatever may be the

* Psalm xi. 4-5.

particular duty which requires our attention and observance. As it is by outward acts that we are to confess CHRIST before men,* and that men are to know that we are HIS disciples,† so is it of the motives from which those actions spring that GOD will take cognizance, for out of the heart are the issues of life.‡ HE will not be mocked;§ and mere lip service is of all things most hateful in HIS sight. If we think to obtain HIS favour by our public acts of fealty at the appointed seasons for paying the homage which HE requires, and meanwhile continue in our sins, we may be sure that we shall be an abomination in HIS sight, from whom the whited sepulchre fails to conceal the loathsomeness it is intended to hide. There are men who make it no part of their religion to abstain from wickedness, but fancying that the account which each man will have one day to render for the deeds|| done in the flesh will partake of the nature of a balance sheet, in which, while their sins tell against them, their pro-

* Luke xii. 8.

† John xiii. 35.

‡ Proverbs iv. 23.

§ Galatians vi. 7.

|| Romans ii. 6.

fessedly religious acts shall reckon in their favour, they delude themselves into the false security of thinking that at the Eternal audit they may escape with favour. Oh ! how fearful will be the awaking from such a dream ! Man may deceive his fellow, but he cannot mock his MAKER ; and we may rest assured that our Heavenly FATHER will only account of that worship as sin, which, from its being unaccompanied with general purity of life and conduct, HE cannot otherwise regard than as the sacrifice of fools.

Having, then, already seen that the Prayer Book is a faithful exponent of Scripture, in the sense in which the Church has ever held and received those records, of which she is the Divinely appointed witness and keeper, it follows, from what has been said to-day, that we should not only value this book as a manual of public devotion, and a witness of the teaching of the Catholic Church in this country, but that we should also bring our general conduct into harmony with the indications of excellence afforded by its statements, and so avail ourselves of its assistance in maturing that disposition of mind, and temper of heart, which alone

will qualify us to receive, as CHRIST's true and living members, the favour with which GOD will view and visit those who are in HIS SON.

Let us then glance at the character which the Prayer Book presupposes in those who frequent our sanctuaries and use its heaven-born strains. We have already pointed out that we are by that book required to watch unto prayer,* to be watchful and to pray without ceasing;† to be resolute in the maintenance of GOD's Truth;‡ and to let all our things be done with charity:§ and therefore it only remains to allude to those incidental traits of disposition which will be found in the devout and faithful member of the Church of England. An enlightened attendance, then, on the services of the sanctuary may be said to imply a recognition of the doctrine of holy places; it being an admission, in practice, that GOD is more especially present in some places than in others; that where HIS name is set, there will HIS ear be attent,|| and there will HE come unto HIS peo-

* 1 Peter iv. 7.

† 1 Thessalonians v. 17.

‡ Jude, verse 3.

§ 1 Corinthians xvi. 14.

|| 2 Chronicles vii. 15.

ple and bless them; and hence will arise a spiritualized reverence, of whose outward exhibition, in specified forms, it will be my business to speak in a future lecture,* taking, as our guide therein, in addition to the Rubrics, the eighteenth canon, which treats of the reverence and attention to be used within the church in time of Divine Service. The Churchman who is devout, in accordance with the Book of Common Prayer, recognizes, as the objects of assembling and meeting together in public, the giving of God thanks for the great benefits which he has received: to set forth God's most worthy praise; to hear His most Holy Word; and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary as well for the body as the soul.† Now, none can give GOD thanks aright for the benefits which he has received, who does not accustom himself to view GOD's hand in everything which falls out. HE causeth His sun to rise alike upon the evil and the good,‡ and HE is always at hand to be mindful of the un-

* Through an error of the printer, this Sermon has been misplaced; see Lecture VI.

† Exhortation, Morning and Evening Prayer.

‡ Matthew v. 45.

worthy sons of men. A careless, thoughtless person cannot be rightly thankful, for he will omit many special subjects which should evoke his gratitude, and will give utterance to the language of thankfulness with which the Prayer Book provides him without any vital reality of feeling or warmth of principle. How seldom do persons who receive kindnesses from their fellow-men, recognize in the acts of the piously charitable and kind, the finger of HIS goodness of whose only gift it cometh that HIS faithful people do unto HIM true and laudable service. The truly thankful Christian traces the operation of Divine goodness and mercy in the commonest contrivances for the preservation of his life in safety, and for the enjoyment of those blessings with which the path of life is strewn, if only men would know how to value and use them aright: and, above all, such an one never loses from his sight the ineffable goodness manifested in the manner of his recovery from the thralldom and the penalty of sin; but he evidences his sense of the vastness of the Divine love and mercy, by thankfully and diligently using all the means of grace as the irreversibly constituted helps to his attainment hereafter of that

glory of which he has now the hope. The duty of setting forth GOD's praise likewise calls for an observant and spiritualized temper; for without this, how shall our hearts be filled with the unison and harmony of Divine things? He who only sees as the world sees, and whose feelings are occupied and engrossed with the things of time and sense, will never be able to catch the sweetness, or give back the melody of that chant with which, in unceasing strains, the bright and spotless attendants of Heavenly Majesty do their homage before the Holy, Holy, Holy, LORD GOD of Sabaoth. He alone can praise GOD, whose daily and hourly care it is to mind heavenly things, and who, while he mingles in the world, gives sure token that it is but as a pilgrim, and that, as his home is elsewhere,* so his actions bear the impress and are fashioned in the mould of the society into whose immediate presence he is longing to enter.

Then, again, the Prayer Book presupposes an admission that GOD has revealed HIMSELF to man in former ages by HIS Prophets, while, in these last days, HE has spoken to us by

* Hebrews xi. 13-16.

HIS SON,* and our attendance in the sanctuary involves a recognition of the supremacy of the Scripture, and of the vast importance and comfort of hearing GOD's most Holy Word. The Church accepts with thankfulness and awe all that GOD has revealed of HIMSELF, and does not presume to attempt making plain that which HE has veiled in mystery; and, therefore, she gives to her children of the unadulterated Word of GOD four chapters daily, besides the Psalms in their regular course and order. She does not, as is the practice of the sectaries, dwell unduly upon particular chapters supporting a particular scheme of doctrine, because her statements of Scripture are in strict keeping with the whole of the Sacred Volume, being but the reflection of the Divine Mind as therein pourtrayed. It is not necessary to her stability as a teacher of GOD's people to mistrust Scripture in its fulness, and therefore she provides for the reading of one whole chapter after another in daily course, without those qualifying expositions after each verse or two, with which it is the custom of

* Hebrews i. 1-2.

those to intersperse their reading of Scripture who reject the Church as a Divine Interpreter, competent, though not infallible. And he who would hear GOD'S Holy Word to his profit, must hear it in such wise as he alone can whose spiritual perceptions are freed from the film with which sin would encircle them, being quickened with that love of Truth and of the God of Truth which is the life of the soul.

But especially the Prayer Book presupposes strict self-examination : for, how else shall we acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness ; or how else shall we know how to ask, even in such measure as we can, for those things which are requisite and necessary as well for the body as the soul ? Without the most severe daily self-examination, carried on in the privacy of our closet, and on our bended knees in secret prayer, and accompanied with careful meditation on the Truths of GOD'S most Holy Word, that so conscience, enlightened and enkindled by the sacred fire of its precepts, and warnings, and promises, may do her office as the candle of the LORD within us :*—without

* Proverbs xx. 27.

this course of self-discipline, we must not hope to serve or please GOD; nor can we expect that He will regard the incense we offer in His courts as other than the sacrifice of fools.

Again, would we in truth keep our foot when we go into GOD's house: would we really have our lives in unison with the prayers we there offer, and so have our offerings to possess a sweet-smelling savour in GOD's sight: we must believe that GOD has left in His Church the power of absolving the penitent from sin, and we must qualify ourselves for the reception of GOD's pardon by truly repenting, *i.e.* truly sorrowing for past sin, and truly desiring amendment of life for the future, and unfeignedly believing His Holy Gospel. We must be resolved to hurt nobody by word or deed, and be careful to bear no malice nor hatred in our hearts: or how else shall we stand acquitted for our constant use of the LORD'S form of prayer? We must have a well-grounded loyalty: how else shall we acknowledge GOD to be the *only Ruler* of Princes, or pray for deliverance from all sedition, privy conspiracy and rebellion? We must have an expansive love for the brethren: how else shall we pray for

all sorts and conditions of men? We must be filled with that disposition which shews itself in alms-deeds and sympathetic acts for CHRIST'S poor: or what mockery is it to pray to that GOD who uses us as HIS instruments in HIS dispensations of providence, that HE would succour, help, and comfort all that are in danger, necessity, and tribulation; and that HE would defend and provide for the fatherless children and widows, and all that are desolate and oppressed! To forgiveness of temper and meekness of spirit we are also enjoined, by our supplication that GOD would forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and turn their hearts. Nor is our sympathy to be confined to the temporal wants of our brethren. The Churchman who is devout, in accordance with the spirit and temper of his Prayer Book, will be imbued with a desire to extend and strengthen the Church's influence at home and abroad; and his heart will burn that the glory of the LORD may cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.* To this he will be urged, not only by the frequency with which he is urged

* Habakkuk ii. 14.

to repeat the petition, **THY** kingdom come, but also by the fear of mocking **GOD**, when he asks of **GOD** to give to all people increase of grace to hear meekly **HIS** Word, and to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit; and, in another place, to strengthen such as do stand, and to comfort and help the weak-hearted, and to raise up them that fall, and, finally to beat down Satan under our feet. For, is it not for these gracious purposes that **GOD** has placed **HIS** Church in the world? And, is not the efficiency of the Church made by **HIM** to depend on human co-operation with Divine grace? He, then, cannot pray aright that **GOD** would be pleased to make **HIS** ways known unto all men, **HIS** saving health unto all nations, who does not, to the best of his power, contribute of his exertions and his wealth to make the Church efficient at home and abroad, so that all **HE** has made may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under one Shepherd.*

And, in conclusion, this grand lesson is

* Collect for Good Friday.

taught us by the Prayer Book, that our sufficiency is of GOD.* There is not a peculiarity in our condition, nor an incident in our lives, nor a circumstance which affects us, however remotely, which does not demand our gratitude, as proceeding from our merciful FATHER, who has ordained it for our ultimate good, and HIS gracious purpose will assuredly be attained if we strive reverently to promote it. Now we are taught in the Prayer Book, that these and all our other blessings come of the free favour and bounty of GOD, and for these we thank HIM, as well in the noble expressions of gratitude with which the Prayer Book is interspersed, as more especially in that matchless Thanksgiving, wherein we bless HIM for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life, but, above all, for HIS inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our LORD JESUS CHRIST, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

* 2 Corinthians iii. 5.

LECTURE X.

HOLY SCRIPTURE AND THE CHURCH CALENDAR.

PSALM LVI. 10.

*In God's Word will I rejoice, in the Lord's
Word will I comfort me.*

EVERY man of a cultivated mind, must be prepared to admit that some of the most chastened of our delights are to be derived from the study of those works of eloquence and imagination which have, for a series of years, age after age, contributed to the enjoyment of mankind. Many men who have been the untiring devotees of those empty pleasures of sense and the world, which are hardly less successful in enfeebling and vitiating the taste, than they are inadequate to the satisfaction of the higher principle in man,—many such flutterers in the

sunshine of frivolity have yet in their hours of loneliness and self-retirement drunk freely of the nectar of literary enjoyment. They have at times stood forth as the most enthusiastic admirers and the most successful followers of the poets and orators of antiquity. Now, to a mind capable of appreciating all that constitutes the charm of language and sentiment, where can so rich a feast be offered as in the volume of the Scriptures,—that Word of GOD of which the Psalmist in the text declares that it is his rejoicing and his comfort? Where shall we find such various and such natural descriptions, such touching tenderness, such beautiful simplicity, such terrible sublimity? The lover of poetry may find the most admired human compositions surpassed in the hymns of triumph scattered throughout the Pentateuch; in the devotional effusions of David; in the sublime descriptions of the book of Job. The admirer of impassioned eloquence may find in the addresses of the Hebrew Prophets, and especially in the writings of St. Paul (take, for example, the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, which the Church has adopted as her funeral sermon), instances of a

strength of conception, and a copiousness and power of language unequalled in Grecian and Roman literature. Those passages of the heathen poets which have been selected as models of pathetic composition, have been justly said to be inferior to the elegy pronounced by David over Jonathan.* The most tender sentiments which mere imagination ever suggested, fall short of those which are so elegantly displayed in the histories of Joseph and of Ruth, and especially in the narrative of our SAVIOUR'S life and sufferings.

The beauties of style, however, which adorn the Scriptures are incidental advantages, and a great portion of their charm arises from the fact, that they are not studiously displayed, but spring naturally from the subjects which are treated of. Independently of the manner in which they are thus recommended, the subjects themselves open the most noble field for contemplation to every reflecting mind.

Holy Scripture treats of all that is great and noble; of the ALMIGHTY GOD HIMSELF; of HIS Perfections; of HIS Nature; and of HIS

* 2 Samuel i. 25-26.

Providence. It proposes for our contemplation a BEING who is a Spirit,* without body, without parts, without passions,† subject to neither chance nor change,‡ existing from eternity to eternity the same.§ It overwhelms every mind, however accustomed to reflect upon number and magnitude, with the conception of the unlimited power of GOD set forth in the variety of HIS works. It perplexes the most subtle with the consideration of HIS universal Presence; of that mysterious existence which pervades at once all parts of infinite space without distraction. It astonishes us, who can conceive of time only as made up of successive parts of duration, by speaking of the HIGH AND LOFTY ONE that inhabiteth eternity;|| who dwells, as it were, at once in all the moments of infinite duration; with whom the past and the future are the same as the present; and, in the strictest sense, incomprehensible by us, one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.¶ It raises our thoughts far beyond

* John iv. 24.

† James i. 17.

|| Isaiah lvii. 15.

† Article i.

§ Psalm xc. 2.

¶ 2 Peter iii. 8.

the limits of human comprehension when it fixes them upon the wonderful union of infinite justice with infinite mercy; upon the truth of HIM who cannot lie;* upon the wisdom of HIM who is "the only wise GOD;"† upon the holiness of HIM who cannot look upon iniquity‡ upon the justice of HIM who is "righteous in all the works which HE doeth;"§ upon the benevolence of HIM whose goodness endureth continually.||

The Scriptures also open to the mind of man vast subjects of speculation peculiar to revealed religion. They disclose as much as it is fitting for us to know respecting the very nature of GOD; they speak of the Three distinct Persons, all united in one Divine essence; they set forth the wonderful manner in which full satisfaction was made to inflexible justice for the sins of offending man; they describe the nature and the influence of the HOLY SPIRIT; they offer the means of unravelling the apparent confusion in which the events of this

* Titus i. 2.

† 1 Timothy i. 17.

‡ Habakkuk i. 13.

§ Daniel ix. 14.

|| Psalm lii. 1.

world are involved ; they speak of time and of eternity ; “ of the life which now is and of that which is to come ;” * of heaven and of hell ; of death and of judgment. They also, whose minds are better qualified to receive pleasure through the medium of the imagination, may find in the study of the Scriptures, subjects upon which to dwell with peculiar delight. The terrible and the majestic ; the glorious, the splendid, the beautiful ; and whatever is engaging,—all—are in turn displayed in the Sacred Volume. In what other book shall we find a series of images so magnificent as those with which David describes the coming of the LORD in the eighteenth Psalm, and HIS omnipresence in the hundred and thirty-ninth ; or, as those in which Isaiah speaks of HIS omnipotence and greatness, in the fortieth chapter of his prophecy ? Neither is imagery of this nature confined to the poetical parts of Scripture. The grandeur of the transactions which are related elevates the style even of its histories. Where shall we search elsewhere for a real event which so fills the imagination as the

* 1 Timothy iv. 8.

descent of Jehovah upon Mount Sinai, at the giving of the law? "Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and GOD answered him by a voice."*

Equally sublime is the description of the ALMIGHTY passing by the cave in which Elijah had taken refuge.† And the following passage from the Book of Job has been instanced by a celebrated writer‡ as one of amazing sublimity:—"In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face: the hair of my flesh stood up: it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice saying,—Shall mortal man be more just than GOD? Shall a

* Exodus xix. 18-19.

† 1 Kings xix. 11-12.

‡ Burke on the Sublime and Beautiful, part ii. sect. 4.

man be more pure than his MAKER?"* Still more majestic are the intimations occasionally dispersed throughout the sacred writings, respecting the splendour which accompanies the more immediate presence of GOD in heaven.† The Scriptures, indeed, usually expressed, as they are, in the words of soberness, as well as of truth,‡ do not frequently dwell upon the glories of the celestial state, except for the purposes of exciting our desires and our wishes to be made partakers of it. They rather imply than describe the inconceivable glory of GOD. They speak of HIM "who is the blessed and only POTENTATE, the KING of kings, and LORD of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen nor can see."§ They allude to "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD ;|| and to the unspeakable words which it is not lawful for man to utter."¶ They thus lead our minds to ideas of the grandeur and magnificence of GOD, generally without

* Job iv. 13-17. † Isaiah vi. 1-4 ; Psalm lxxx. 1 ;
Revelation, chaps. iv. v. vii. xviii. xix. 11-12.

‡ Acts xxvi. 25.

§ 1 Timothy vi. 15-16.

|| Ezekiel i. 28.

¶ 2 Corinthians xii. 4.

using any definite words, which might probably excite erroneous impressions. But sometimes the veil is partially withdrawn, and we are permitted to catch, as it were, a distant view even of the glory of the heavenly throne.* It does not become us to examine with too great curiosity the things which are thus revealed for our encouragement. Although the expressions used are designedly taken from things which we can see, in order that we may be able in some measure to comprehend them; we know that they really describe a glory, greater than the eye of man could endure, or his heart conceive.† And the book which contains them, while it makes man wise unto salvation,‡ places before his imagination objects which far surpass the conception of the most fertile invention.

In other parts of the Scriptures, the mind is refreshed with the most pleasing images of calmness and repose. We are led through green pastures, and beside the still waters.§ The voice of instruction is modulated to the most harmonious numbers; and precepts, suffi-

* Revelation iv. 2-11.

† 2 Timothy iii. 15.

† 1 Corinthians ii. 9.

§ Psalm xxiii. 2.

ciently attractive by their importance, receive additional charms from the beautiful form in which they are embodied.

Again, we can understand how the Psalmist found comfort and rejoicing in GOD'S Word, from the fact that it is replete with matter calculated to engage the affections. Not to speak now of the tenderness and delicacy of sentiment, which adorn many parts of the sacred volume, the subjects displayed are calculated to elicit the most vivid emotions of gratitude and love. The Scriptures describe the universe as filled with the goodness of GOD.* They dwell upon the benevolence which is so conspicuous in all His material works.† They refer to the deep, which covereth the earth like a garment, and is replenished with things creeping innumerable, which all wait upon GOD ; to the waters which go up by the mountains, and down by the valleys, which GOD hath founded for them ; to the springs which are sent into the valleys, and run among the hills.‡ They represent everything which we enjoy in this life, as the imme-

* Psalm xxxiii. 5.

† Psalm cxlv. 9.

‡ Psalm civ. 6-8-10-25-27.

diate gift of our heavenly FATHER,* in whom “we live, move, and have our being.”† Further, the Scriptures declare the inconceivable mercies of our Redemption. They describe man in his fallen state, dead in trespasses and sins,‡ and subject to everlasting misery. They contrast the purity of GOD with the wickedness of man: they set forth the mercy of GOD, who pitieth them that fear HIM, like as a father pitieth his children:§ they speak of HIM as long-suffering, patient, gracious, good.|| They transmit the grievous complaints of those who felt conscious of their own guilt, and of their inability to save themselves; they contain the complaint of Job: —“If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean, yet wilt THOU plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me; for HE is not a man as I am, that I should answer HIM, and we should come together in judgment; neither is there any Day’s-man betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.”¶ Then, they display the mercy of GOD, which devised a remedy for so great an

* James i. 17.

† Acts xvii. 28.

‡ Ephesians ii. 5.

§ Psalm ciii. 13.

|| Exodus xxxiv. 6-7.

¶ Job ix. 30-33.

evil, that where sin abounded, grace might much more abound.* They speak comfortably to the people of GOD, who have received of the LORD's hand double for all their sins.† They describe in detail the wonderful dispensations of the Gospel: the incarnation of the SON of GOD; the privations which HE endured during HIS life; HIS sufferings; HIS death; HIS resurrection; HIS ascension; HIS assumption of HIS Mediatorial kingdom; HIS intercession in heaven for HIS faithful people and followers upon earth.‡

Far be it from me to urge the study of the Bible, only because it possesses unrivalled interest and charms of diction. We stand upon higher ground: we, in a sense more sublime than could be attained by the Jews, search the Scriptures, because in them we have the words of eternal life.§ But I have thought it well thus to insist upon their noble and sublime character, as a fitting prelude to the setting

* Romans v. 20.

† Isaiah xl. 2.

‡ The Author would here acknowledge the use that has been made in many of the foregoing passages of a Sermon by the Rev. Temple Chevallier, B.D. published in his Hulsean Lectures.

§ John v. 39.

before you the spiritual use of the directions of the Calendar, by which it is required that the whole of Scripture be read through in stated course.

As to the original of the practice of our Church, in appointing Lessons from Holy Scripture as part of the public service, we might go back as far as the origin of the sacred Canon of Scripture ; for if the book of Job was the first in existence, and was published, as some think, by Moses, for the use and benefit of the Church, it was doubtless a most proper lesson for the then state and condition of the Israelites, under their sufferings and afflictions in Egypt, and afterwards in the wilderness. And when, subsequently to this, the same inspired author had written his five books, which we call the Pentateuch, what was the book of Deuteronomy but a kind of prelude to the Gospel, and an apposite emblem of our second lesson ? not only, as it is for the most part, an exposition of the moral law contained in the Ten Commandments, but chiefly as it gives us the spiritual and evangelical interpretation of the mysteries veiled in the ceremonial part of the Levitical law, and therefore was as necessary for all the people of

the Jewish Church to hear or read, as it is for us Christians to have lessons out of the New Testament, after we have heard one out of the Old. Thus stood the Canon for many years, except we add the book of Joshua, and, perhaps, Judges and Ruth. And these were all the Scriptures which David so often celebrates, in various manners, in the Psalms, and of which he speaks in the text as his rejoicing and his comfort. After the return of the Jews from their captivity, GOD was pleased to stir up the spirit of Ezra, to collect and revise the sacred Canon (which by that time had been completed, by the addition of the Psalms and the Prophets) and probably in his time, or soon after, was introduced the custom of reading them at all their public meetings. That the Scriptures were divided into lessons, and that it was the custom on the Sabbath day to read a select portion out of the Law, or books of Moses, and another out of the Prophets, appears from sundry passages in in the New Testament.* The reading out of Moses, or the Law, was their first lesson; and the voices of their Pro-

* *e.g.* Luke iv. 16-17; Acts xv. 21, xiii. 15-27.

phets, which were also read every Sabbath day, was their second. This method, then, was the established practice of the Church in our SAVIOUR'S time, and in the time of HIS Apostles ; a practice which our LORD often honoured with HIS presence, and when present always joined in. To this practice the usage of our own Church is exactly conformable. Thus we see the use of reading the Scriptures, and that, too, by way of lessons in the public service. The practice grew up by degrees, from small beginnings, until it became the constant and standing order of the Jewish Church. Thus it certainly was in our SAVIOUR'S time ; and HIS presence and practice, sufficiently evidenced HIS approbation. No wonder, then, the Christian Church borrowed this, with many other Liturgical rights and customs, from the Elder Church, and adopted the use of reading the Scriptures by way of lessons, in her public service, with this variation only, that she takes only her first lesson out of the Old Testament, having the New Testament, which the Jews had not, out of which to take her second lesson.

In truth, the goodness of GOD in revealing, and HIS power in preserving these Holy Books,

as also the Church's courage in defending them, her exactness in translating, and her prudence in dividing them, shew that it is the great concern of all Christians to understand them, and their duty to use them. And thus there is great wisdom in the particular place which the Church has chosen for the proclamation of these lessons; for having been prepared before, by prayer, purity, and holy resolutions, we are in a condition to hear them with all reverence, according to that excellent example of those devout Jews, who, when the law was read to them, lifted up their hands, bowed down their heads, and fell on their faces. The Scriptures daily salute us as Ehud did the King of Moab,—“ I have a message from GOD unto thee;”* and it will be sad indeed, if, while the tyrant at that news rose from his seat,* we will not lift ourselves up from the gross and carnal thoughts in which the world seeks to engross us. Let us rather seek to profit by every passage of GOD'S Most Holy Word; and, in order thereto, let us consider how we may apply to ourselves, the

* Judges iii. 20.

several lessons which the Church appoints to be read.

And 1. The first lesson is taken out of the Old Testament. Now to apply it to our spiritual well-being, we may consider that besides the Psalms, which may be regarded as “the quintessence of all Scripture, and most accommodated for worship and devotion;” and which, therefore, the Church orders us so to read as to join in once every month; besides the Psalms, the Old Testament consists of these parts:—1. The Law; 2. The History; 3. The Morality, *i.e.* the Prophecies.

1. The ceremonial laws are omitted in our daily service, because they were of temporary obligation, and the reason of this obligation was not on the surface; yet, if we have time, leisure, and judgment, we may in private find in them matter for most useful meditation, by applying the types to CHRIST, and those precepts which are literal and obscure, to practical holiness. Of the Judicial law also, but little is read in public; but so much of it is used, as is the foundation of the most ancient and the best laws which have been made, either by heathens or Christians, and contains the most exact rules of

justice which the world ever saw; and, if we make due allowances for the difference in our circumstances, they will form an excellent standard by which to test our own consciences in many matters of our intercourse with our neighbours. Of the moral law no part is passed by, because there are the rules of eternal goodness, to which the consciences of all men give consent at the first hearing, and so are of universal obligation, but they bind *us* in a higher manner than any.* Wherefore let us learn from them, as we may learn, our duty to GOD and man, to discover all hateful sins, and encourage ourselves to obedience. To such obedience a reward is promised, which promise GOD “for HIS part will most surely keep and perform,”† either literally in a temporal sense, or with advantage in a spiritual manner. And if we would spiritualize the meaning of the promises, we may do so by understanding soul for body, grace for prosperity, and heaven for Canaan; and in the same manner we must also apply the threatenings, to make us penitent for past sins, and

* Matthew v. 14-20.

† Baptismal Office, Book of Common Prayer.

cautious lest we should again offend against so holy a law of so great a GOD.

2. The history is all read, and is a remarkable account of the methods of GOD'S providence in the government of the world, from the Creation to the return from the captivity. And we are to love and reverence it above all other records, for the sake of its Divine Author, and for its undoubted trustworthiness ; for the persons it treats of—the chosen people of GOD ; and especially for its excellent design, which is to teach us to fear GOD, to love holiness, and avoid iniquity, by a clearer and more easy method than the mere inculcation of precepts : for these lively pictures of the final success of piety, and the ruin of wickedness, are more readily apprehended, more deeply impressed, and more firmly remembered, than advice or bare exhortation.

3. The moral precepts in the books of Job and Solomon (and some parts of the Apocryphal writers which we, like the primitive Church, read for example of life and instruction of manners),* recommend to us all sorts of virtues

* Article vi.

and set forth the means of attaining unto them, and the advantages of practising them. Here are rules for princes and people ; for masters and servants ; parents and children ; husbands and wives ; young and old ; rich and poor ; the prosperous and the afflicted : and that we may every one learn our own lessons, we must mark those sentences which encourage to some virtue in which we are deficient, or reprove some vice of which we are guilty ; and not, out of idleness or malice, fix on those only which we fancy suit our neighbour, thus leaving our own faults uncensured, and depriving both ourselves and them of the benefit of this excellent part of the Church's holy teaching.

The Prophecies are the predictions of ruin from the mouth of GOD to all wicked men, heathens, and enemies of GOD's people ; as also to those who then gloried in that name and yet continued in iniquity. How sadly do the prophets complain of such ! Yet everywhere they intermix with their reproofs earnest invitations to amendment, and pressing exhortations to sincere reformation and the practice of that hearty obedience which the letter of the law did not express, but which is here required as

an introduction to the Gospel of JESUS. As to the more mysterious prophecies, we need not curiously pry into them, nor seek particularly to know to what Church or persons we may fix the woes therein denounced ; but rather, applying them to our own lusts, let us take courage from the assurance that if we, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live ;* that, as GOD hath sent HIM to us in the flesh, and so far made good these predictions, so we may admit HIM to reign in our hearts, and then we shall experience the truth of that triumph, joy, and peace, which is promised to wait upon HIS government ;† and also avoid the terrors that are denounced against the workers of iniquity.‡

The New Testament is read for the second lessons, because it is the perfection of the law, the substance of the types, and the fulfilling of all the prophecies : and, because it has manifested more fully the reward which was promised, it heightens and improves the duties which are required of us ; for, since to us much

* Romans viii. 13.

† Romans xiv. 17.

‡ Luke xiii. 27.

is given, of us much may justly be required.* And that so clear a discovery of GOD'S infinite love may the more powerfully work upon us, let us consider,—1. The history of the Gospel. 2. The Epistles.

Of the Gospel, it may be said that it is an exact narrative of all that JESUS did and suffered for us. We have here an account of HIS miraculous conception, and of HIS mean and humble birth; a record of HIS holy and afflicted life; a register of HIS miracles; a summary of HIS discourses; and a most moving description of HIS painful and meritorious death. Let us, therefore, as we hear these lessons, imagine ourselves of HIS retinue, as if we were giving audience to HIS voice, and beholding HIS wonders of goodness and might. Let us carry our pride to HIS nativity; our idleness to the scenes wherein he was so industriously employed in doing good to all; our anger to HIS meekness; our revenge to HIS gentleness and love of HIS enemies; that they may blush and die when their deformity is contrasted with so pure and spotless a pattern. See and wonder,

* Luke xii. 48.

admire, love and strive to imitate your Saviour in kindness and charity, in mercy and pity, in diligence and piety, in patience and constancy, in faith and in zeal ; and rejoice to have HIM presented to you thus, because your Captain is your companion, and hath done HIMSELF what HE requires of you.*

In the Epistles, we have farther explanations of the Divine love, and the covenant of grace, declaring GOD'S designs in that covenant, His expectations from us, and the preparations made for us, with wise cautions against the deceits of Satan, the cruelty of persecutors, and falsehoods of heretics, together with a variety of promises, exhortations, and directions, so closely united, and so majestically expressed, that it requires a quick apprehension and a solid judgment to unravel all the mysteries in them, and yet they that avoid curiosity and self-conceit, and bring humility, love, and holy resolutions, cannot be more effectually improved in knowledge than by the study of them.

The book of the Revelation of St. John the Divine, is only partially read in our public ser-

* Hebrews iv. 14-15.

vice,—an intimation, surely, on the part of our Reformers that we are to bring more than ordinary care and humility to its study.

And now, brethren, having seen the many and varied beauties and excellencies of Holy Scripture, shall it be any wonder to us that, in GOD'S Word, David should rejoice, and that in that he should be comforted? But let us not forget the teaching of the second lesson,* in which the necessity of some man to guide us† in the right understanding of Scripture is set forth, which “man,” in the case of the generality of Christians, I have shewn to be the Holy Church, and the guidance of the Holy Church I have shewn you is to be found in that Prayer Book of which the Calendar is a part. May we not presume that one great end, among many others, why GOD was pleased to deliver HIS Word to HIS Church in writing, and even to engrave HIS law with HIS own hand upon stone, and then to seal up the prophecy with a severe interdiction that none should ever add thereto or take therefrom,‡ was

* Preached April 11.

† Acts viii. 31.

‡ Revelation xxii. 18-19.

this :—that HE might restrain the spirit of vain curiosity, the hunting after novelty, to which men are naturally so prone. This precedent our Holy Mother has piously observed and transcribed into her own practice. She has also committed to writing, not only her Rituals and Forms of Devotion, her Ordination and other Offices, her Articles, Canons, and Homilies, but also a translation of the Holy Bible for the common use of all her members. And to prevent any alterations or disagreement in the reading of Holy Writ, she leaves not even to her ministers, much less to her people, or any unauthorized teachers, the choice of what parts of Scripture they please to read in the public congregation ; but, by an authentic table and calendar, she dictates the portions of Scripture which are to be read. Thus treading in GOD's steps, she leads her children in GOD's way, and, in a holy concurrence with the Divine Will and Wisdom, labours to cure the itching ears* of carnal men, and to correct that vitiated taste which loaths the heavenly manna; for no other reason but because it is every day dispensed, and every year the same.

* 2 Timothy iv. 3.

Shall it not, then, be our true wisdom to make a spiritual use of the Calendar; and, either in church or at home, read the lessons which our spiritual Mother has appointed for each day? For, not to dwell on the peculiar appropriateness of her special Proper Lessons on the Great Festivals and High Days of the Church: not to dwell on the wisdom with which the special appointments are made; is it a light advantage to be reading the same Scriptures with the whole Church, and to be with the whole Church offering up our prayers for the right understanding of the same passages of Scripture?—thus sending

“ Linked in one sacred feeling, at one hour,
In the same language, the same prayer to heaven.”*

What a security have we here for unity! What an assurance that we shall think the same thing, because we mind the same rule†. Let us constantly, for one year, read at least *all* the Scripture which the Church apportions for our daily bread: let us dwell and meditate thereon, and a choice blessing shall assuredly attend our efforts, and the results of one year

* Southey.

† Philippians iii. 16.

will forbid our ever abandoning the practice while we have strength and opportunity to follow it. Let us make our Calendar our companion in mapping out our engagements ; let us not fix high festive occasions to fall out upon the Church's days of fasting or abstinence, whether they be the weekly ones of Friday, or other occasionally appointed days. Let us call to mind the bright worthies who shine as stars in the Church's firmament ; and, on the several days called by their names, let us seek to learn their story, and, while we thank God for their example, strive, in our measure and degree, to emulate their holy life and conduct. Let us read Scripture as the Church appoints, and thus acknowledging the Church's law, we shall honour the Church's Lawgiver, and think no action too mean which HE will recognize as an act of obedience,* and, as such reward, in the day when HE comes to judge the world.

* " He holds the rule that nothing is little in God's Service."—*Herbert's Country Parson*, chap. xiv.

LECTURE XI.

THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT.

PSALM lxxvii. 2.

*That THY way may be known upon earth, THY
saving health among all nations.*

SUCH is the prayer which the Church, in her solicitude for all sorts and conditions of men, daily offers to GOD. It is adapted from the Psalm which falls within the course of reading for this afternoon, and which the Church has appropriated as one of the hymns for her evening service. And, how can it be right in members of a Church, which thus supplicates the ALMIGHTY to extend a knowledge of HIS ways, and of the Gospel of HIS SON to all nations, to fold their arms in ease, and forbear to make any real efforts for the purpose? After having first set before you the force of the text itself,

I shall proceed to shew that the same solicitude for the advancement of religion in the world pervades the Prayer Book, and then urge upon you the means within your reach, by availing yourselves of which, in self-denial and prayer, you may do your part in the great work, and avert the woe which must fall upon those who ask a blessing, which, while it demands their co-operation, has not yet taken any such hold upon them as speaks in deeds.

When we ask of GOD that HIS ways may be made known to all nations, we acknowledge the interest which the whole family of man have in our prayers, and that, while our hearts beat the highest in sympathy with our brethren of the family of CHRIST, we remember that all men had a common origin in Adam, and that when, by HIS completed sufferings, the second ADAM wrought a work of victory and triumph over evil and the powers of evil, HE included within the stretch of HIS wings of mercy and redemption, each and every member of that fallen family to which by nature we belong.* And thus, as GOD is the Maker, and the Preserver, and the Re-

* 1 Corinthians xv. 22-57.

deemer, too, of all mankind, there is great fitness in our beseeching HIM to make known HIS ways unto all.

By HIS ways, in this place, we may understand either the methods and course of HIS providence, by which HE ordereth all things in heaven and earth, by a wise and harmonious ordering, and the direction which HIS mercy takes to save sinners; or else by HIS ways may be meant HIS commandments and laws, in which sense the Psalmist frequently uses the expression, as indicating the path which HE has marked out as leading to eternal life. We desire that these paths may be made known to the heathen world, that HIS light may shine forth upon them who now sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death.* And not only HIS laws, but HIS Gospel also, which is the meaning of GOD'S saving health, and is so called because it is the blessed way of saving souls by JESUS CHRIST. We indeed are blessed with the knowledge both of the law and the Gospel, and we have abundant comfort and infinite benefit thereby, which should teach us to pity and pray for those millions of our fellow

* Luke i. 79.

creatures who are as yet pagans, blindly worshipping stocks and stones, and serving the infernal spirits instead of GOD, as well as for the followers of the impostor of Mecca, and those obstinate Jews who still reject their MESSIAH. All these have rational and immortal souls, as well as we ; and how sad is the pity that they should live and die in such miserable delusion. If we have any compassion for our own flesh and blood ; any value for souls, which are included in the price paid for our redemption—though they be not washed in those waters of the spiritual Jordan, in which GOD is graciously pleased to put away the leprosy of our proper nature, and to supply us with a share of His own,—we cannot fail to be anxious to realize our Missionary obligations : and, if we call to mind the thousands upon thousands of those who were once enlightened, and had tasted of the heavenly gift,* but who now—some through their own fault ; but many more through the fault of a neglectful avarice in the worshippers of Mammon—are living almost, if not wholly, without GOD in the world,† and are without the

* Hebrews vi. 4.

† Ephesians ii. 12.

means of offering unto GOD thanksgiving, or paying their vows unto the MOST HIGHEST,* according to the ways of HIS own appointment; if we realize the state of spiritual destitution in our large towns, and in our colonies, we cannot but desire by all means in our power to strengthen the hands of the Church through the instrumentality of the Societies for Promoting the Employment of Additional Curates and for the Propagation of the Gospel,—societies standing in need of every possible support from the devout and willing-hearted sons and daughters of the Church. But, not to anticipate our subject : having seen that the text invites us to ask of GOD the extension of the kingdom of HIS SON throughout the world, I wish next to show that it is not only in the Prayer for all sorts and conditions of Men, nor in the adoption of this Psalm as one of the hymns in the Evening Service, that the use of the services of the Prayer Book pledges us to cherish the missionary spirit. Tell it out among the heathen, that the LORD is KING,† is the language of our Church, not only as regards the fact of the proclamation

* Psalm l. 14.

† Psalm xcvi. 10.

of the Gospel, but also in reference to our so sending forth the glad tidings of salvation, that they may be received as the message of a king, that they may witness for the reigning dynasty of JEHOVAH. By sending them out, that is, by the means of those commissioned officers of HIS earthly kingdom, whom our invisible PRINCE, seated high upon HIS throne of power has promised to support and strengthen in their onslaught upon the enemies of HIS rule.

The first trace of this design on the part of our Church, is to be found in that petition of the LORD'S Prayer, "THY kingdom come," by which we ask of GOD that HIS government may be everywhere extended, and that the knowledge of HIS power, and allegiance to it, may come upon all the nations of the earth, as by HIS great mercy it hath already come to us: and again in that in which we ask for the prevalence of an angelic obedience to the Divine commandment—on earth no less than in heaven. By whom is GOD'S will done in heaven? Is it not by countless hosts of spirits, who, by virtue of their office, are called angels? And of what are they messengers but of mercy? And how do they do GOD'S will? Is it not in ministering

to the heirs of salvation,* and in carrying on their allotted part in the economy of human sanctification? And if men will but do GOD's work on earth, as the angels do it in heaven, they will not rest nor be satisfied until from sea to sea, from east to west, and from north to south, the knowledge of the LORD covereth the earth, as the waters cover the sea.† By the constant repetition, then, of the LORD's Prayer in Divine Service, and our own continual offering it up in private, we pledge ourselves to be solicitous for the spiritual, no less than for the temporal well-being of our fellow creatures. Again, in the constant recurrence of the Psalms of David as a part of our daily worship, the Church is unceasingly using the language of interest and sympathy with the whole human race, and is ever supplicating, that, as GOD's Presence reaches into every place, so HIS Name may be known and honoured wherever HIS illimitable BEING reaches in connexion with the offer of redeeming mercy. Again, in the song of the Three Children;—how can we call upon all the children of men to “bless the LORD, to

* Hebrews i. 14.

† Isaiah xi. 9.

praise HIM and magnify HIM for ever," unless we carry to them the knowledge of HIS greatness and HIS mercy,—unless we do our part in causing His ways to be known upon earth—His saving health among all nations? How shall we summon all lands to be joyful and serve the LORD with gladness, and come before HIS Presence with a song, if their minds are uninformed of HIS nature and HIS goodness, and their tongues untutored in the language of Christian devotion? To travel through the whole range of Collects would occupy more time than is necessary, for a very slight effort will call to your mind how constant is the supplication for the efficiency of the Church, and the general extension of the REDEEMER'S kingdom; and while of course the predominant solicitude is for those of the household of faith (in which, by the way, is included a large portion of our colonial possessions), there is ever an onward look to the case of those who have not as yet been brought under the shadow of the Cross. But although I cannot mention all the missionary allusions in the Collects, I may not omit to ask you to prepare yourself, by liberal gifts this day, to join with sincerity and truth in the peti-

tion, on Friday next, that "the Merciful God, who has made all men, and hates nothing that HE has made, nor wills the death of a sinner, would have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of HIS Word, and so fetch them home to HIS flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold, under one Shepherd, JESUS CHRIST the righteous." So entirely missionary in its spirit is this Collect for Good Friday, that the society for which your oblations will be this day collected, adopts it as one of the prayers with which it requires all its proceedings to be prefaced. In the Litany we are taught to pray for all that have erred from the way of truth, and for all such as are *deceived*. We ask that CHRIST'S Holy Church Universal may be ruled and governed in the right way; and the charter of that Church is, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."* By the means of that Church it is that the "Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world,

* Mark xvi. 15.

for a witness unto all nations.”* In the Litany, too, we ask that GOD’s mercy may be shewn upon all men ; and in the Thanksgiving, we aver that, of all HIS mercies, that is the greatest, wherein is shewn HIS inestimable love in the redemption of *the world* by our LORD JESUS CHRIST ; and in the Collect to be said in the Ember Weeks, we pray that the clergy of the Church may set forward the salvation of *all men*.

There can, then, be no reasonable doubt, that one qualification expected in those who come into the courts of our Zion is, that they should be able to turn their eyes and hearts, with enquiring and sympathising earnestness, into those regions where Satan asserts a sway which has only the check of the natural conscience ;—a candle of the LORD,† truly, but easily extinguished amid the fitful gusts of unbridled passion. Yes, brethren, the Prayer Book expects of us that temper of anxiety for the well-being of the heathen, which is indicated in the language of the text. To offer up to GOD the prayers with which our solemn services abound,

* Matthew xxiv. 14.

† Proverbs xx. 27.

without seriously desiring what we pray for, is a profane mockery of HIM who sitteth on the throne of grace and mercy now, but who will sit on the throne of judgment hereafter. Let not any such mad and impious guilt be ours: but, while our brethren in CHRIST have our first care, let not those who have no tie upon us but their common humanity with ourselves, be without our solicitude. The Church is a great missionary institution; and we are not faithful and true members of the Church, unless we strive to cultivate that temper which gives the extension of the REDEEMER'S kingdom, and its purity, wherever it is already planted, and hold upon our desires and affections. And this brings me to say, that, as we should cultivate a desire for the propagation of the Gospel, as the only condition upon which we can offer aright the LORD'S own form of prayer, and those other petitions for the efficiency of HIS kingdom among men, with which our services are interspersed, — so the only test of the sincerity of our desires in this behalf, is to be found in our making such sacrifices as are within our power, for their accomplishment. The all-wise GOD has given us this much of insight into the economy of HIS deal-

ings: viz., that HE is pleased to appoint men as the agents of HIS will in the conversion of the world. The blessed words in which our SAVIOUR made the promise of HIS abiding presence with HIS Church, are the grand, the commanding call to every one of us, to every soul brought within the fold of that Church—in which HE is “always,” and will be “to the end of the world,”*—to be up and to be doing in this best labour of Christian love, the evangelizing of the whole world. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of GOD! How unsearchable are HIS judgments, and HIS ways past finding out!”† Yet in part HE hath revealed HIMSELF to us, and has told us that we are to be workers together with HIM.‡ HE has promised to be with HIS human instruments in effecting HIS own work; and HE has nowhere promised that HE will effect that work at all without us: nay, rather, HE in many ways intimates the truth contained in that petition in the Burial Service, in which we ask that HE would accomplish the number of HIS elect,

* Matthew xxviii. 20.

† Romans xi. 33.

‡ 2 Corinthians vi. 1.

and hasten HIS kingdom. Why is this? Is it that GOD needeth our service? "Can a man be profitable to GOD, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?"*

We know that he cannot. We know that GOD, if it so pleased HIM, could at once, with as little effort as that with which HE formed or upholds the smallest particle of dust we tread on; at once, with a word, aye, and without a word, bow the hearts of all mankind as the heart of one man,† and bring them by a single act of HIS volition within the fold of CHRIST's flock. But HE has seen fit to order it otherwise. HE has put limits to HIS own saving grace, and made it in part to depend on the co-operation of HIS poor creatures. Most mysteriously wonderful is this dispensation. The GOD of mercy, HE who willeth not the death of one single sinner,‡ permits that myriads and millions of sinners shall remain in helpless ignorance of HIM and HIS Word; if man, that is a worm,§ neglect the high commission entrusted to him,—if man, feeble, erring

* Job xxii. 2.

† 2 Samuel xix. 14.

‡ Ezekiel xxxiii. 11.

§ Job xxv. 6.

man, raise not on high the lamp of eternal truth and righteousness to his fellow-men. I say, then, and I warn you to consider that, by the plainest and most obvious obligations of Christian duty, as well as by the most endearing motives of Christian love; by all that you owe to CHRIST, as your LORD and MASTER, by all that you owe to HIM as your REDEEMER, by all that you hope to obtain through HIM as your INTERCESSOR, you are bound to work with HIM and for HIM, that HIS kingdom may come, and come in its fulness, to all mankind, that GOD's ways may be known among men, and His saving health among all nations; that those glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people,* may be freely and effectually preached to all the world.

But how can private Christians, with duties and occupations of their own, which they must not lightly abandon,—how can they join in preaching the kingdom of GOD to remote and barbarous nations in the East and West? My friends, you well know the answer is ready; you know that, by your gifts to the Institution

* Luke ii. 10.

for which you will this day be called upon to make your offerings, you can, in accordance with primitive custom, bring of your wealth and lay it at the feet* of the successors of the Apostles in this land; that so they may appoint fitting persons as instruments for the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts, and especially in the British Colonies.

This society is one of which the worst that its bitterest enemy,—and O! that among those who name the Christian name it should have an enemy!—or its most vigorous and fastidious censor,—and, alas! for the Christian meekness and modesty of that man who shall venture to pronounce a censure upon the united conduct of an entire and unanimous episcopate here and in our colonies!—the worst, I repeat, which its bitterest enemy, or its most vigorous and fastidious censor can allege of this society, is, that it may perhaps, by the very nature, and still more, by the magnificence and extent of its glorious labours, have contributed to hide both from the rulers and from the people of this land, what is, in truth, their duty, their paramount

* Acts iv. 37.

and indispensable duty. If such be, indeed, our society's reproach, forgive us this wrong, and, by an appeal to their shame, and their sense of Christian obligation, urge the councils of the nation to redress it. Let us not cease in our prayers, nor tire in our exertions, that those in high place may no longer abdicate the highest attribute of sovereign power, no longer transfer to others the glorious privilege (they cannot transfer the duty) of extending the knowledge of God's truth through every province and every dependency of the mighty empire which owns their sway. How shall we expect, however, to be heard in quarters where there is a divided opinion concerning our holy faith? How shall the members of the Church insist on the co-operation of the representatives of the nation in the great work of evangelizing the world, when those among them who bear no good will to our Zion can argue the comparative unimportance of the effort, from the apathy of those sworn soldiers of the cross who profess, as we do, all our hopes of covenant mercy to be centred in the ark of Christ's Church? Shall not our apathy on the score of its being a ruler's duty, be sharpened into a

weapon against ourselves, and be made a plea for listlessness on the part of those who have not that sense of the privilege involved in this duty, which, as faithful sons and daughters of the Church, *we* are bound to entertain? If the state is unmindful of her obligations, let not the Church forget her high commission and charter; let not Englishmen forget to blush for their nation, and to pray that its disgrace may be wiped out! Who is there who feels not his heart swell within him when he contemplates those remote islands, which the poet of imperial Rome described as, in his day, separated from the great family of man,—then a lonely speck on the extreme verge of the world's wide map, now become the centre of all that interests and agitates and influences the courts and councils of the greatest of the earthly great! But, my friends, while you exult in the proud consciousness that these British isles are the smallest portion of our dominion; that every other quarter of the globe presents incalculably larger and fairer portions of our empire than those which own obedience to the British crown in Europe, can you be insensible to the vast, to the tremendous responsibility which

attaches to you as Englishmen and as Christians, in consequence of this high distinction? To you, I say (for you I am addressing, and not the governors of this land), you are responsible, deeply responsible to God and man for such a state of things as is still existing in our foreign possessions, and which is wholly without a parallel in the history of Christendom. Consider what that state of things is; take in your hands the map of the British empire; trace it in Asia from the confines of Persia to the wall of China (no longer offering an obstacle to the planting of Christ's Church); count, if you can, the millions upon millions who are subjects of the same earthly sovereign with yourselves, and then number, as you may (it is an easy reckoning, we must talk no more of millions), number those who own allegiance to the same ALMIGHTY KING, are members of the same spiritual community, citizens of the same heavenly Jerusalem.

Nor should we gain a much more cheering spectacle, did we turn to our colonies. Nay, is this all? is this the worst? Would to GOD it were! We know that, not content with witnessing in silent and unchristian apathy the mon-

strous abominations which surround us there, we have used our power, employed our arms, dishonoured our soldiery, by making them the guards and out-posts of the realms of darkness. We have made an unhallowed gain of idol worship, and been stately and magnificent in everything, save as subjects of our King MESSIAH.

Oh, brethren, let us wipe out the black stain of this foul disgrace from our national escutcheon. You are not without the knowledge, that for ten righteous within its bounds, GOD was ready to spare a devoted city.* HE prepared a Zoar† for Lot, and an ark for Noah;‡ and HE will not forget those who, in this hour of the Church's need, and the nation's shame, step forward to answer, with a bountiful alacrity, the appeal of the Fathers of our Church in behalf of the authorized handmaid of our Church in the evangelization of the world. Pause, brethren, for a moment, to think of the power which, with GOD's blessing, would be exerted, if only throughout our possessions there were efficient branches of CHRIST's Church, no longer

* Genesis xviii. 32.

† Genesis xix. 21.

‡ Genesis vii. 1.

requiring support from us, nor needing all their zeal for themselves, but becoming themselves in turn missionary, and so many centres whence might stream forth the light, of which the Church is the commissioned candlestick among the nations. The thought is too vast to be pursued here. As on this day,* more than eighteen hundred years ago, covetousness led an apostle to betray and sell his LORD: but let not covetousness withhold *your* hand, or deaden *your* heart; but, as we bid you, “let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your FATHER, which is in heaven;”† resolve to make such a silent gift, through the Church’s appointed means of giving,‡ as shall shew that you are in earnest when you pray,—“THY kingdom come: THY will be done in earth, as it is in heaven;” and as you say,—“We humbly beseech THEE, for all sorts and conditions of men, that THOU wouldst be pleased to make THY ways known unto them, THY saving health unto all nations,”—resolve on becoming subscribers to this society, if you are

* Preached on the Wednesday in Passion Week.

† Matthew v. 16.

‡ The Offertory.

not already so, and at least resolve on doubling your annual contributions, that the society may be assured of a permanent increase of gifts, and, if so be, making a special donation to meet the claims now urged upon you by the whole bench of Bishops.

Be ye, brethren, workers together with God;* bear your part in the glorious, the God-like work of saving the souls of men, — of bringing them to the knowledge of those glad tidings of great joy, which are designed by the GOD and FATHER of all to be to all people.†

And may GOD bless those who give and those who labour in this holy cause. The cause is HIS: be it ours to promote it according to the power which HE has given us, through the means which HE has appointed. And if our work be thus undertaken, then will HE visit it with HIS blessing; and ours will be the blissful lot of those who, having turned many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.‡

* 2 Corinthians vi. 1.

† Luke ii. 10.

‡ Daniel xii. 3.

LECTURE XII.

BEAUTY AND BANDS. DOCTRINE AND DISCIPLINE.

ZECHARIAH xi. 7.

*And I took unto me two staves: the one I called
Beauty, and the other I called Bands, and I
fed the flock.*

IN the chapter in which these words occur, the prophet changes the strain in which he had been indulging in the two previous chapters; and in the place of the glories and triumphs which he had been recounting as hereafter to be achieved by Israel and Judah, in consequence of the recovery of GOD'S favour, he tells of the ruin and destruction which awaited them, as the penalty of their disobedience. He shews that upon them the sun of prosperity would cease to shine with brightness and warmth,

because between its rays and themselves they interposed the clouds of their own waywardness and rebellion. Before their final glorious restoration, an event of a most calamitous nature was to take place,—even the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, which is plainly here foretold, and ascribed to its proper cause, namely, punishment for notorious wickedness.

GOD's people are here spoken of under a similitude of constant occurrence, not only in the old, but also in the new Testament, viz., that of a flock; and this flock is represented as being under the guidance of corrupt and unprincipled shepherds, men who were devoid of pity for the helplessness with which they were surrounded; nay, men who so preyed upon those whom their office bound them to feed and protect, that these latter are styled the flock of the slaughter. In the fourth verse we have an instance, by no means uncommon among the prophets, of the typical character of their speeches and actions,—*i. e.*, of their representing in themselves the persons and characters of others. Zechariah is commanded to enact the part of CHRIST, and become the great and good shepherd to feed this “flock of the slaughter,” that flock which

their own shepherds destroyed instead of feeding. And after describing, in the most graphic manner, the entire destitution of the people, the gracious office of MESSIAH (prompted by a consideration of the case of the poor of the flock), is told in the words of the text, where the REDEEMER, speaking in prophetic vision by HIS servant, declares,—“ And I took unto me two staves: the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands, and I fed the flock.” His people being spoken of as a flock, it was fit that HE who came to feed them should assume HIS proper badges of office as their shepherd. The custom of shepherds was to take two rods or staves: one was rounded at the top, that it might not hurt the sheep, and was used for counting them and separating the sound from the diseased; and the other had an iron hook at the end of it, to pull in the stray sheep and hold them fast. And CHRIST, in HIS character of the good shepherd, has two staves, to which HE assigns appropriate and significant names. “ The one I called Beauty,” since by it the healthy appearance and comfort of the flock, as also their completeness, was provided for: “ and the other I called Bands,”—as meaning that

discipline by which provision is made for the recovery of the stray sheep, and for the well-compacted unity of those within the fold. And thus, having these two staves,—HIS rod and HIS staff, with which to comfort them,*—HE feeds the flock; making them to lie down in pastures of tender grass, and leading them beside the waters of comfort.†

It is not necessary for my present purpose, that I should prosecute the bearing of this passage, in its primary application, farther; for, although it would be instructive to compare the actual circumstances of the Jews with the prophecy before us, and to learn from its literal fulfilment the sure steadfastness of GOD'S Word; it is my aim, on the present occasion, to connect these words with the flock of GOD at present, and to shew that the GREAT SHEPHERD still carries HIS two staves of Beauty and Bands, in the use of which HE provides for the proper care and feeding of the sheep and the lambs of HIS fold; and that it is only as these two are preserved entire that there is peace, and quietness, and plenty for the people of promise.

* Psalm xxiii. 4.

† Psalm xxiii. 2.

By the staff of beauty, I shall suppose that fixed provision for Divine worship, which excludes heresy from infecting the flock; that rounded rod, by which the diseased are separated from the healthy, and the numbers of those who feed in the pastures periodically ascertained: while, by the staff of bands, we must understand those provisions of discipline, by which unity is ensured, and the recovery of those who have wandered provided for.

St. Paul exhorts his son in the faith, Timothy, to hold fast the form of sound words which he had heard of him.* Now, from this passage, an argument of no light weight is drawn in favour of the supposition that the Apostles, during the time they remained at Jerusalem after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, were engaged in agreeing upon some concise statement of Evangelical truth, which should be the groundwork of their appeals to the heathen, among whom they journeyed, calling men everywhere to repent.† Of settled liturgies, we have very early accounts, and it is not possible to conceive that there could have been any

* 2 Timothy i. 13.

† Acts xvii. 30.

sufficient means for the early converts to reject those who preached another Gospel than that which Paul had declared unto them,* unless they were supplied with a symbol, or profession of faith closely resembling in character, if not identical in expression, with that which we now call the Apostles' Creed. Nay, it is improbable that the Apostles delayed the arrangement of a liturgy beyond the necessity arising out of the bountiful harvest of converts reaped after the heaven-spiced sermon of St. Peter on the day of Pentecost ; for, we read that, having been baptized, those newly added to the Church continued in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship,† *i.e.* subject to their teaching and guidance ; and, in breaking of *the* bread, *i.e.* of the Eucharist, and in the prayers ; for such is the force of the passage in the original, not in prayers only, but in *the* prayers, agreed upon by the Apostles, and offered by them in the name of the assembled worshippers. And there is again allusion to a fixed liturgy in the second chapter of the first Epistle to Timothy, where St. Paul requires Timothy to provide that, in the prayers

* Galatians i. 8.

† Acts ii. 42.

of the faithful, shall be included supplications and intercessions, and giving of thanks, to be made for all men, for kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.* And the same Apostle rebukes the Corinthians for their extemporaneous outbreaks. "How is it then, brethren, that when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation? Let all things be done to edifying."† And to the same point is the remonstrance, that the people cannot say Amen, unless they know for what they are to pray; and still more pungently the Apostle urges, "Let all things be done decently and in order.‡ And, that we may not doubt, we have the sanction of our DIVINE HEAD in the use of forms,—that we may not doubt that it is HE HIMSELF who has taken the staff of beauty in HIS hand,—we find HIM in HIS own addresses to the THRONE OF GRACE praying, using the same words;§ and, when HIS disciples be-

* 1 Timothy ii. 1-2.

† 1 Corinthians xiv. 26.

‡ 1 Corinthians xiv. 16-40.

§ Matthew xxvi. 44.

sought HIM to teach them to pray, as John had taught his disciples, HE does not rebuke them, and tell them that, under the Gospel, they would be relieved, by direct inspiration of the SPIRIT, from such trammels ; but HE complies with their request, and binds them to the constant and invariable use of the form HE gave them, as a necessary part of their devotions.* Let us, then, be assured that there is happiness for a people only in proportion as they have a liturgy which is in accordance with the Word of GOD, interpreted by primitive antiquity ; a liturgy which shall contain the creeds of the Church, and be associated with such other declarations of the faith as may be called for by the prevalence of any particular error. If Christianity be anything more than a name, if there be anything like truth in the view we are accustomed to take of the divinity of its origin, of the intentions of its FOUNDER with respect to mankind, and of the manner in which HE provided for its progress, one conclusion is entirely irresistible :—it is this, that the great truths which form the foundations of the Christian system,

* Luke xi. 1-4.

that is to say, the respective relations between GOD, the MEDIATOR, and the World HE came to save, in their preceding and future bearings, must have been clearly and fully laid down, as far as they were ever to be known under that revelation, at its very commencement. If, then, the doctrines of Christianity were clearly laid down at its commencement, and, if we have any reason to suppose that they were afterwards sullied and polluted by human inventions, there would seem to be only one method of ascertaining the justice of our suspicions, and of attempting the restoration of the doctrines to their native and genuine form. If the stream has contracted impurities in its course, we must recur to the fountain-head for pure and unsullied water. We must recur for truth and light, first to Scripture,—then, if difficulties or doubts occur as to its interpretation, to those Christian writers who lived at the outset of the Christian system. They knew what was taught by the living voice of the Apostles; they knew, therefore, what is taught in that Scripture wherein the Apostles, though dead, speak with a living voice, and their writings are thus a precious record of Christian doctrine. At the

time of the Reformation, this truth was recognized in its fulness by those Bishops of our Church, who re-arranged our Prayer Book, and drew up our Thirty-nine Articles, and thus the staff of beauty was carefully preserved in our fold; nay, even the earlier continental reformers recognized its fitness; and, of the dangers which rush in, as with the impetuosity of the mountain flood, when the staff of beauty is broken, and ministers and people alike handed over to the license of their own imaginations, we have a most pertinent illustration in the cold Rationalism which, until very lately, infected the whole of the German Protestants; where we find many of them resigning themselves to religious meditation, and to that fascinating dream of the mystics in all ages,—the notion of an union with God, and an immediate perception of the truths of religion. In truth, the open denial of all value of the reason, is the constant, and, from the very construction of the human mind, the necessary consequence of the reason's asserting her authority out of her own sphere. What has passed in Germany teaches us the positive necessity of a liturgy, with confessions of faith, to which the teachers of reli-

gion must give a positive declaration of adherence. Whatever may be said in theory as to the freedom of Protestantism, no individual Church can, humanly speaking, exist long, where a contrary practice prevails. The Church of England expressly assumes the exercise of such an authority; and to it we owe, under GOD, that, while the sects are ever and anon changing, and dwindling away in numbers, or corrupting in doctrines, we hold the faith which has been held from the beginning. By this provision, harmony, an essential element of Beauty, is secured. And let it then be ever our ground of thankfulness to ALMIGHTY GOD, that while, in common with the whole of Christendom, we possess the Sacred Oracles,—which alone give the Staff of Beauty its strength, we have, as members of the Church of England, also our Book of Common Prayer, in the use of which we are prevented from distorting Scripture, and thus are enabled to benefit by that staff which is only calculated to support when it is rightly used. We can never sufficiently praise and bless GOD, for having, in HIS over-ruling providence, so bestowed the gracious influences of HIS Holy Spirit on our Reformers,

as to enable them to withstand the idle cry of Popery and formalism, which was made against them by the spiritual pharisees of their day; and thus, while they removed the corrupt additions of the middle ages, they did not destroy, but restored to their just proportions, all that was really primitive and Catholic. The Liturgy of a Church is truly the GREAT SHEPHERD'S staff of Beauty; for it is the wrought gold clothing with which the king's daughter is arrayed.* In the Prayer Book we have provision for leading us into all that pasture, which is the heritage of GOD'S flock. Here we have the prayers of saints, confessors, and martyrs: the sighs and tears of holy men in every age have been wafted up on high, in the language in which we have this day been joining. Thousands upon thousands of the ransomed ones of CHRIST,—now at rest, awaiting the advent of that day when their bodies shall come forth† from their mortal shrouds, to be clothed in the vesture of immortality, in robes of heavenly whiteness,—have threaded their way to the thrones of glory, through the very same courts

* Psalm xlv. 13.

† John v. 28-29.

of grace which it is ours to tread. These have been clothed in the very same armour, on the right hand and the left, which those who have proved it know, to their souls' comfort, to be provided in such rich abundance in the Liturgy of our Church. When the wild torrent of heresy swept over the face of English Christendom, and high Calvinism declined into cold Socinianism, and when over-heated dissension maddened into fierce political aversion to all that is good and ancient,—to what does the English Church owe, under GOD, so much as to her Book of Common Prayer? From her pulpit a lifeless theology might be, and was propounded: but it pleased GOD not to break the staff, whose name is Beauty; and the Prayer Book being preserved to us, as a witness for Catholic truth, the excesses of the pulpit were held in check, and its deficiencies in due time supplied. In that book are embodied, in a substantive form, all the Christian verities; and, as long as it is kept in its integrity, it will be a standing censure on any attempt to worship GOD otherwise than in the beauty of holiness.* So thoroughly does

* 1 Chronicles xvi. 29.

the Prayer Book echo the language and the teaching of Scripture, that, should any heretic draw near with idols in his heart, bent on offering homage after a whim and conceit of his own, and yet use the soul-stirring strains of our holy prayers and hymns, he will in truth be offering with his lips the worship of JEHOVAH, though his heart be bent to Rimmon.* In this book there are unfailing tests of heresy; so that where it is attended to and complied with, there cannot long be error; and it contains directions for the right use of the several means of grace; proper care is taken for the due reading of GOD'S Word; and the highest office of our religion, the Holy Communion, is solemnized, in its essential particulars, in precisely the same form and language in which the Eucharistic Sacrifice has been ever offered by GOD'S people.

But the GREAT SHEPHERD has not only a staff which HE called Beauty, but also one which HE called Bands, or, as the margin hath it, Binders. We have here a significant allusion to the constitution and exercise of that Divine government, which, in the Jewish Church,

* 2 Kings v. 17-18.

resided in a particular family, with Aaron as its head, and in the Christian Church, is handed down in a particular succession of office, originating with the Apostles commissioned for that purpose by their and our LORD. Apart from the discipline administered by those in Apostolic succession, there is no sufficient, no Divine guarantee for unity. I do not say that unity may not be preserved in a society for a time, distinct from the influence of this succession; but such unity is an accident, and not a consequence. A careful examination of the seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, would shew that the unity of the Church is made by our LORD dependent upon the unity of the Apostolate,* and that this unity is preserved in the Christian Church, by keeping up the direct succession of ministerial office, in the line of her bishops, up to the time of Paul and Peter, who

* See a Sermon preached in St. Paul's Cathedral, at the 141st Anniversary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, A.D. 1842, by Edward, Lord Bishop of Salisbury; and Sermon XV.—The Unity of Christians Dependent on the Unity of the Apostolate,—in the volume of Sermons on Doctrine, Discipline, and Practice, by the Author of these Lectures.

jointly sent Clement, from whom we now derive our authority to minister in holy things. In the possession of this Staff of Bands, is involved all that authority which is imparted in the commission,—Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.* That the Church of England conceives that she has with her the staff which the GREAT SHEPHERD calls Bands is clear, from her putting these very words into the mouth of her Bishops, when ordaining priests for the work of the LORD'S heritage : and every priest of the Church of England is, by the very fact of his ordination, made, as it were, to lay his hands upon this staff, called bands, and to take his share in carrying it ; for to him is, in the most solemn form, committed the authority to retain in unity and order those who are within the fold, while it is his province to reclaim the wanderers, and to prescribe the terms upon which they shall be restored to the unity which they have violated, and to the enjoyment of the pastures which they have forsaken. Much has, indeed, been done to diminish the strength and

* John xx. 23.

usefulness of this staff, called bands, by the fact that, owing to the Church being established, civil disabilities attach themselves to spiritual censures, and thus the discipline of open penance has grown into disuse, a fact which the compilers of the Prayer Book, in the preface to the Communion Service, mourn, saying, it is much to be wished that it might be restored again. But all this, notwithstanding, is not removed from among us entirely; and although it is not fully exercised, the power to do so is still there, and the rightfulness of so doing is still admitted. We have now seen how it is that a Staff of Beauty, as indicating a clear and distinct declaration of faith, to which strict adherence must be required, and a Liturgy which shall practically apply the doctrines of that declaration to men's wants and infirmities, and a Staff of Bands, as indicating a form of government and discipline which shall repress every tendency to carelessness, and every attempt at innovation, and punish and reclaim all wanderers, are the essential characteristics of the Church under the present guidance of her Divine HEAD. And I have also shown that the Church of England, pure and Apostolical in her descent, and primi-

tive and Catholic in her usages and doctrines, fulfils to her children the office of a shepherd, acting in strict subordination to the Great Bishop and the Shepherd of Souls, the Invisible and glorified Head of the Church Universal,—the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

It now remains for me to warn you against the fatal error of supposing that soundness in doctrine and discipline, the integrity of the staff called Beauty, and the strength of the staff called Bands, are sufficient for the life and strength of the flock. They are necessary accessories, but they are not enough ; and, indeed, when I say that they are necessary, I mean not to deny that the Christian spirit may exist independently of them both. True it is that at the farthest verge of the earth, and remote from every form of every Church, the spirit of Christian hope, and love, and joy, may glow in the bosom of the Christian. But that neither alters those principles of human nature, which, as far as we can judge, first induced the GREAT FOUNDER of Christianity to plant HIS Church in the precise constitution in which it has been handed down to us, nor lessens our bounden duty of service to this Church. And therefore,

speaking generally, we may affirm that a flock is not in the way of health unless the shepherd have his two staves, the one which he calls beauty, and the other bands; but still, let me repeat, these are not enough. It is not said,—“And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands, and *they* fed the flock:”—but,—“And I took unto me two staves, the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands, and *I* fed the flock.” Yes: doctrine and discipline are necessary in shewing us what is pasture, and keeping us within the limits wherein it may be found, but it is the SHEPHERD HIMSELF who must feed us. And I fed the flock; I JESUS the SAVIOUR; I CHRIST the ANOINTED; I the LIVING BREAD that came down from heaven,* fed the flock.

Remember, brethren, CHRIST feeds us, not only by leading us in the green pastures, but by being HIMSELF our food. HIS invitation to us is that, if hungry or athirst we feed on HIM, and HIS promise is, that then we shall never hunger or thirst again.† Rest not then, brethren, in your privileges. They are many and great, and so in

* John vi. 41.

† John vi. 51, iv. 14.

proportion is your responsibility also great; but privileges do not save, they only entail duties; and duties, if not performed, provoke the Divine displeasure. Privileges, then, are subjects rather for our fear and trembling than our boasting; and will only avail to our final condemnation, if they be not improved to our everlasting well-being. We cannot plead a want of guidance; for duly commissioned ambassadors of the MOST HIGH carry the staff which is called Bands: we cannot urge that we know not which are the wells of salvation, nor that we are ignorant how to discern between the waters of life, and the poisoned streams of heresy; for in our Prayer Book we have a clear indication that the staff which is called Beauty is not broken. Let us then, seeing how we are guided, and guarded, and cared for, feel that we are weary and heavy laden,* and go to the foot of the SAVIOUR'S Cross, and there laying down our own weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,† let us put our necks in HIS yoke, and bend our backs to HIS burthen. Let us walk in the ways of the Prayer Book, and

* Matthew xi. 28.

† Hebrews xii. 1.

submit to the guidance of our Pastors; and then we shall find that CHRIST will feed us. Let us walk in the ways of the Prayer Book. Has she a provision by which we may daily assemble in the House of Prayer, to seek the promise,—Where two or three are gathered together in MY name, there am I in the midst of them:* let us not neglect the assembling of ourselves together as is the manner of some.† Does this same provision involve the hearing of GOD's pronounced pardon to all who truly repent and unfeignedly believe HIS Holy Gospel; and shall we esteem such a boon lightly: does it further involve the hearing of four chapters and five Psalms (on an average) each day, and shall we, when man is “to live by every word which proceedeth out of the Mouth of GOD,”‡ despise the proffered antidote to the evils of life? Does the Church keep Holy Day—Fast and Festival—and shall we neglect her seasons of special commemoration? Let us not do so, lest we should lose an opportunity of communing with our GOD. Again, what shall be said

* Matthew xviii. 20.

† Hebrews x. 25.

‡ Matthew iv. 4.

for us if we count the blood of the covenant* a light and trifling thing, and turn heedlessly away when bidden to the Holy Communion? It is only as CHRIST feeds us that we have life. HE feeds us in HIS Church, but being in HIS Church does not feed us. We are fed and healed by looking upon HIM, and touching the hem of HIS garment. In the days of HIS earthly sojourn, this was an act of the senses,—the sight and the touch pertain to our bodies, but now it is our souls which must look on HIM and be healed. Faith and love are the eyes of the soul; through them we drink in spiritual life. But if these be clouded and overcast with sin, no life can be thus drawn in. Repentance alone can remove this veil of sin, and when it is once removed, faith and love perform their proper functions and we are closely united to the SAVIOUR. Be it ours then to watch for HIS footsteps; and, thankful for the presence of His staves of Beauty and Bands, let us be always remembering that it is HE, and not they, which feed us; and let us, therefore, seek HIM in every thing and every where; and

* Hebrews x. 29.

while we are united to the body of the Church by Ordinances, let us seek a living unity with the soul of the Church, by that faith which is the evidence of things not seen,* and by that charity which edifieth,† and which is the bond **all** perfectness and peace.

* Hebrews xi. i.

† 1 Corinthians viii. 1.

A
LENTEN ADDRESS
TO THE
CONGREGATION OF ST. JOHN'S CHURCH,
CHELTENHAM.

“ And JESUS being full of the HOLY GHOST, returned from Jordan, and was led by the SPIRIT into the Wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days HE did eat nothing: and when they were ended, HE afterwards hungered.”—LUKE iv.—1, 2.

Compare also ST. MATTHEW vi.—16, 31.

LENT FASTING.

"The Scriptures bid us Fast : the Church says, Now."

'Tis true we cannot reach CHRIST's fortieth day ;
Yet, to go part of that religious way

Is better than to rest.

We cannot reach our SAVIOUR's purity ;
Yet are we bid, "Be holy, even as HE,"—
In both let's do our best.

Who goeth in the way that CHRIST hath gone,
Is much more sure to meet with HIM, than one
That travelleth bye-ways.

Perhaps my GOD, though HE be far before,
May turn, and take me by the hand, and more,
May strengthen my decays.

Yet, LORD, instruct us to improve our fast
By starving sin, and taking such repast,

As may our faults control :

That every man may revel at his door,—
Not in his parlour ;—banqueting the poor,
And among those, his soul.

GEORGE HERBERT.

ADDRESS, &c.

DEARLY BELOVED,

The unhappy encroachments which have of late years been made upon the Church by the world; and the habits of luxury and indulgence which so universally prevail, have rendered the observance of the Holy Season, upon which we are now entered, in but too many instances a name without a reality. Now we read at the end of the calendars of our Prayer Books, that the forty days of Lent are to be observed as days of fasting or abstinence: we lament in the Communion Service the absence of the "godly discipline" of "open penance," which was wont to be observed "in the primitive Church, at the beginning of Lent." And we are taught this day to pray, "Be favourable, O LORD, be favourable to THY people who turn to THEE in *weeping, fasting, and pray-*

ing." It is clear, therefore, that the Church of England expects from her devout children a course of self-discipline during this season, which is very partially observed, even by many whose aim it is to do her bidding, so far as GOD shall enable them by HIS grace. This defective obedience is in some sort attributable to the absence of definite notions as to the origin and objects of the LENTEN FAST; and I am induced to hope that a brief consideration of these will be conducive to our more reverent observance of a season hallowed in the minds of Christians by the examples of our LORD and of HIS faithful followers, in early times.

The Greeks called the Lent Fast τεσσαρακοστή, and the Latins, Quadragesima, both which words denote the number "forty;" whence this Fast was called Quadragesimal. It does not, however, sufficiently appear that the Apostolic Christians observed forty days for this purpose: it seems more probable that they observed forty hours—the time that our SAVIOUR lay in the grave, *i.e.*, the Friday and Saturday before Easter: the time that CHRIST the Bridegroom was taken from HIS disciples, between HIS Passion and HIS Resurrection. It is true that

in the time of Irenæus and Tertullian, that is, in the second century, there were other additional days of fasting superadded to these by several Churches, in the exercise of their undoubted liberty in this respect. There does not however seem to be solid ground for supposing that the precise number of forty days was fixed upon, (although the Lent was called the Quadragesimal, or Forty Days Fast), until the time of Gregory the Great; and, possibly, not until Gregory II, in the beginning of the eighth century. That there was an observance of Lent, which was Apostolical, seems clear: but it had its infancy and childhood in point of duration, and was not at first full forty days. Of the increase in the number of days, that "godly Doctor, Saint John Chrysostom," as our Homilies style that Archbishop of Constantinople, in the fourth century, gives the following account:—"Why do we fast these forty days? Many, heretofore, were used to come to the Communion indevoutly and inconsider-

* As quoted in "Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church," book xxi. chap. i. sect. 6; to which the reader is referred for fuller information.

ately, especially at the time when CHRIST first gave it to HIS disciples; therefore our forefathers, considering the mischief arising from such careless approaches, meeting together, appointed forty days for fasting and prayer, and hearing of sermons and holy assemblies, that all men in these days being carefully purified by prayer, and almsdeeds, and fasting and watching, and tears and confession of sins, and other the like exercises, might come, according to their capacity, to the holy table." And hence we gather that what the fathers mean when they speak of Lent as a Divine Institution, is, that there is some precedent or example for it in the extraordinary practice of the forty days' fast of our SAVIOUR—the true Jonas, as St. Jerome calls HIM—and those of Moses and Elias.

Cassian, a disciple of St. Chrysostom, gives, also, another reason for the institution of Lent, as we now have it. He says—"At first there was no observation of Lent as long as the perfection of the Primitive Church remained inviolable; for they who fasted, as it were, all the year round, were not tied up by the necessity of this precept, nor confined within the straight bounds of such a fast, as by a legal

conviction : but when the multitude of believers began to depart from that apostolical devotion, and brood continually on their riches ; when instead of imparting them to the common use of all, they laboured only to lay them up, and augment them for their own private expenses, not content to follow the example of Ananias and Sapphira ; then it seemed good to all the bishops, by a canonical indiction of fasts, to recall men to holy works, who were bound with secular cares, and had almost forgotten what continency and compunction meant, and to compel them, by the necessity of a law, to dedicate the tenth* of their time to God."

But after all, this question of the *origin* of the Lent Fast is of comparatively less importance, as the Church of England clearly has adopted it as a season of fasting for her children ; and that she has a right to do so she determines by saying that " Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, ceremonies or rites of the

* Excluding Sundays, which are always excepted out of the Fast, Lent would afford about a tenth of our time for this exercise.

Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying."—*Article xxxiv.*

Let us, therefore, now proceed to consider the objects included in the observance; and, first, it is a Season of Fasting or Abstinence. And concerning Fasting,

“WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?”

CHRIST'S *example*. “When HE had fasted forty days and forty nights, HE was afterwards an hungred.” *St. Matt.* iv. 2. “HE did eat nothing.” *St. Luke* iv. 2. At other times also HE fasted, till “HE hungered.” *St. Matt.* xxi. 18.

CHRIST'S *own words*. “They come and say unto HIM, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but THY disciples fast not? And JESUS said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber fast, while the Bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the Bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But the days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.” *St. Mark* ii. 18-20.

“This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.” *St. Mark* ix. 29.

“When thou fastest, anoint thine head, and

wash thy face ; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy FATHER which is in secret: and thy FATHER, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." *St. Matt.* vi. 17-18.

Apostolic example. "As they ministered to the LORD, and fasted, the HOLY GHOST said, Separate ME Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." *Acts* xiii. 2-3.

"When they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the LORD, on whom they believed." *Acts* xiv. 23.

St. Peter continued praying upon the housetop, till "he became very hungry." *Acts* x. 10.

"St. Paul, being in danger by sea, "after long abstinence stood forth in the midst," to address the crew ; and for fourteen days, with meat at hand, they "continued fasting." *Acts* xxvii. 33.

"In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of GOD,—in watchings, in fastings." *2 Cor.* vi. 5.

"I have been—in fastings often." *2 Cor.* xi. 27.

"I keep under my body, and bring it into

subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away." 1 Cor. ix. 27.

Apostolic precept. St. Paul instructs married persons, how they may "give themselves to fasting and prayer." 1 Cor. vii. 5.

WHAT SAITH THE PRAYER BOOK?

Doctrine of the Church. "The second book of Homilies doth contain a godly and wholesome doctrine, as doth the former."—Hom. iv. of good works: first of Fasting. *Article xxxv.*

Ordinances of the Church. At the end of the Calendar is a "Table of the Vigils, Fasts, and Days of Abstinence, to be observed in the year."

After the Nicene Creed, "the curate shall declare unto the people, what Fasting-days are in the week following to be observed."

Persons of riper years, going to be baptized, are to be "exhorted to prepare themselves with prayers and fasting for the receiving of this holy Sacrament."

Prayers of the Church. "Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the spirit, we may ever obey THY godly motions in righteousness and true holiness."

“Be favourable to THY people, who turn to THEE in weeping, fasting, and praying.”

And do any ask wherein Fasting consists ; let our Reformers make answer :—

“Fasting, even by CHRIST’S assent (*Luke v.*), is a withholding of meat, drink, and all natural food from the body, for the determined time of fasting. And that it was used in the primitive Church, appeareth most evidently by the Chalcedon council, one of the four first general councils. The six hundred and thirty fathers assembled there, to reform the great abuses crept into the Church in those days, and to restore this so good and godly a work to the true use thereof, decreed that every person, as well in his private as public fast, should continue all day without meat and drink, till after the evening prayer.

“We do not, however, urge that that order, which was used among the Jews, and practised by CHRIST’S Apostles after HIS Ascension, is of such force and necessity, that that only ought to be used among Christians, and none other ; for that were to bind God’s people unto the yoke and burden of Moses’ policy. But to this end it serveth, to shew how far the order of

fasting, now used in the Church at this day, differeth from that which was then used." *Homily of Fasting.*

And do any ask for the ENDS of Fasting ; I will again quote the Homily :—

“ There be three ends, whereunto if our fast be directed, it is then a work profitable to us, and accepted of GOD.

“ The first is, to chastise the flesh, that it be not too wanton, but tamed and brought in subjection to the spirit.

The second, that the spirit may be more earnest and fervent in prayer.

“ The third, that our fast be a witness with us before GOD, of our humble submission to HIS HIGH MAJESTY, when we confess and acknowledge our sins unto HIM, and are inwardly touched with sorrowfulness of heart, bewailing the same in the affliction of our bodies.” *Homily of Fasting.*

The Church of Rome seems to have transgressed in this as in other matters, by affording cloaks to the hypocrisy of substituting form for spirit. She makes Fasting to consist in the scrupulous observance of a certain diet ; forbidding meat, but allowing fish, wine, &c.

The Church of England does not entertain these nice distinctions: she would have her members neither take nor give trouble in the choice of their food: and she rather tells them they are to fast, than marks out the dietary how: simply stating that no one really fasts, who either chooses pleasant food, or eats so much as to feel no hunger.

That fasting is a means of grace, appears from the following testimony of the "judicious Hooker," and the great Jeremy Taylor:—

"Much hurt hath grown to the Church of GOD, through a false imagination, that fasting standeth men in no stead for any spiritual respect, but only to take down the frankness of nature, and to tame the wildness of flesh. Whereupon the world, being bold to surfeit, doth now blush to fast, supposing that men, when they fast, do rather bewray a disease than exercise a virtue. I much wonder, what they who are thus persuaded do think, what conceit they have, concerning the fasts of the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Apostles, our LORD JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF."—*Hooker, B. v. Sec. lviii.*

"Fasting is not to be commended as a duty,

but as an instrument; and in that sense no man can reprove it, or undervalue it, but he that knows neither spiritual arts, nor spiritual necessities. But by the doctors of the Church it is called the nourishment of prayer, the restraint of lust, the wings of the soul, the diet of angels, the instrument of humility and self-denial, the purification of the spirit." — *Bp. Taylor's "Holy Living."*

And there is hope in urging it at this time, for, as says St. Chrysostom, "Though at other times we preachers cry up and preach the duty of fasting never so much all the year, scarce any one hearkens to what we say: yet when the season of forty days is come, though none exhort or advise them, the most negligent set themselves to it, taking admonition and advice from the very season."

And, surely, there never was an age when this discipline was more needed than in our own. Instead of the Church realizing the unity prefigured in the SAVIOUR'S seamless robe, she is rent and torn by many schisms, and not only are the different branches of the Church at enmity, but they are severally full of party strife. What can be more lamentable than the

state of our own Zion? How far she is from being "a city that is at unity in itself"!* This, then, is a time of mourning; and in these days of the BRIDEGROOM'S absence visibly from HIS Church, the LORD has said that HIS disciples "shall fast";† and since the Word of GOD is sure and cannot fail; since "the Scripture must needs be fulfilled,"‡ let us mind how we leave to the members of other Churches the Christian part of making good our MASTER'S command.

And do any urge that they cannot fast, that their health will not allow them, I would again address them in the language of the sainted Archbishop of Constantinople, so often quoted; and beg them to weigh well his significant words:—

"If thou canst not pass all the day fasting, by reason of bodily weakness, no wise man can condemn thee for this. For we have a kind and merciful LORD, who requires nothing of us above our strength. HE neither requires abstinence from meat, nor fasting simply of us ;

* Psalm cxxii. 3, Prayer Book Version.

† Matthew ix. 15.

‡ Acts i. 16.

nor that, for this end, we should continue without eating only ; but that, sequestering ourselves from worldly affairs, we should spend all our leisure time in spiritual things. For if we would order our lives soberly, and lay out our spare hours upon spiritual things, and eat only so much as we had need of and nature required, and spend our whole lives in good works, we should not need the help of fasting. But because human nature is negligent, and gives itself rather to ease and pleasure ; therefore our kind LORD, as a compassionate father, hath found out this medicine of fasting for us, that we should abridge ourselves in our pleasure, and transfer our care of secular things to works of a spiritual nature. If, therefore, there be any here present who are hindered by bodily infirmity, and cannot continue all the day fasting, I exhort them to have regard to the weakness of their bodies, and not upon that account deprive themselves of this spiritual instruction, but, for that very reason, to pay more diligent attendance on it. *For there are many ways besides abstinence from meat, which will open to us the door of confidence towards GOD.* He, therefore, that eats, and cannot fast, let him give the

more plentiful alms ; let him be more fervent in his prayers ; let him shew greater alacrity and readiness in hearing the Divine oracles : for the weakness of the body is no impediment in such offices as these : let him be reconciled to his enemies, and forget injuries, and cast all thoughts of revenge out of his mind. He that does these things, will shew forth the true fasting, which the LORD chiefly requires. Therefore I exhort you who are able to fast, to go on with all possible alacrity in this good and laudable work. For by how much more our outward man perishes, so much more our inward man is renewed. For fasting restrains the body, and checks and bridles its inordinate sallies ; but makes the soul much brighter, and gives it wings to mount up and soar on high. Do you also exhort your brethren that are not able to fast for the weakness of their bodies, that they should not, upon that account, absent themselves from this spiritual food : but teach them and inform them what you have learned of us, that he that eats and drinks with moderation, is not unworthy of this auditory, but only he that is negligent and dissolute. Tell them what the Apostle says, ‘ Both he that eateth, eateth to the LORD : and he that eateth

not, to the LORD he eateth not, and giveth GOD thanks :* therefore, he that fasteth, giveth GOD thanks, who has enabled him to bear the labour of fasting ; and he that eateth, gives GOD thanks likewise, that this is no prejudice to the salvation of his soul, if he be otherwise willing and obedient.”

And I may add, that it was ever the custom of the Church to forbid public amusements during this season. And, when we consider the costly manner in which entertainments are now got up, it surely would be no small sum which would accrue to GOD’S glory and the use of CHRIST’S poor, were expensive festivities to be now intermitted, if the money thus saved were dedicated to the service of the all-bounteous GIVER of all good things. For, says Leo, “that which is not expended on our tables should be laid out in alms ; and then it will bring us in great gain.”

And to the same purpose Origen says, “That he found it in some book as a noted saying of the Apostles—‘ Blessed is he who fasts for this end, that he may feed the poor ; this man’s fast is acceptable unto GOD.’”

* Romans xiv. 6.

“Mercy and piety,” as Chrysologus words it, “are the wings of fasting, by which it mounts up to heaven, without which it lies dead upon the earth ; therefore, when we fast, let us lay up our dinner in the hands of the poor, that the hands of the poor may preserve us what our bellies would destroy. The hand of the poor is the treasury of CHRIST : {fasting without mercy is but an image of famine ; fasting without works of piety, is only an occasion of covetousness ; because, by such sparing, what is taken from the body only swells in the purse.”

Thus you must not venture to think fasting is an end, it is but a means to an end : but a part of the bearing of our MASTER'S cross after HIM. St. Chrysostom says—“It was usual in Lent, for the people to ask one another how many weeks they had fasted ; and one would answer he had fasted two weeks ; another three ; another all. *And what advantage is it, if we have kept the fast without mending our morals ?* If another says I have fasted the whole Lent, say thou, I had an enemy, and I am reconciled to him ; I had a custom of reviling, and have left it off ; I was used to swearing, and I have broken the evil habit. It is of no advantage

to fast, if our fasting do not produce such fruits as these. * * * Let no one place his confidence in fasting only, if he continues in his sins without reforming. For it may be, one that fasts not at all, may obtain pardon, if he has the excuse of bodily infirmity; but he that doth not correct his sins can have no excuse."

Of the increased solemnity of the HOLY or GREAT WEEK, other opportunities will serve to speak; but, that we may propose to ourselves a definite object in our self-denials, I purpose, instead of collecting the Offertory on each day of that week, "to meet the expenses incidental to the celebration of Divine Service," to do so only on the Thursday, and to collect as follows, on the other days, viz. :—

On the Monday before Easter, for the Society for Promoting the Building and Enlargement of Churches.

Tuesday before Easter for the National Society.

Wednesday before Easter, for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts;

On Good Friday, for the Society for Promoting the Employment of Additional Curates in populous Places;

Easter Eve, for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge;

While, on Easter Day, your gifts for the Poor of the REDEEMER's family, will form an appropriate accompaniment to your reverent participation of the HOLY COMMUNION, which will be administered twice on that day; namely, at NINE in the Morning, and in the Forenoon Service at ELEVEN.

I shall take the opportunity of the pulpit to more fully state the motives which should induce you to set apart more largely of your wealth at this season; and, although I invite you to direct it in the channels I have named, it is, of course, for your own sense of Christian duty to determine whether you will use all, or any of them. I would especially urge that nothing be done grudgingly, nor of necessity, for GOD LOVETH A CHEERFUL GIVER.*

I will only further add (to an address most unexpectedly extended in length), that Fasting is by our LORD constantly connected with Prayer, and both those who can and those who cannot fast can at least pray. Come then, brethren, if not at other times, yet at this, to

* 2 Corinthians ix. 7.

our DAILY SERVICE, and we may not doubt but that GOD will bless your 'venture of faith' in HIS Word and Promise: and I may also say, that there will be a Lecture after the Morning Service on each WEDNESDAY during Lent, and in the morning of each day in the HOLY WEEK of our LORD's Passion. The subject of these Lectures will be The Devout Churchman's Way of Faith and Practice, as laid down in the Book of Common Prayer; and, I trust, that they may be made instrumental, by the Great HEAD of the Church, to our mutual edification in the love and fear of GOD, in the Gospel of HIS dear SON, leading us by the road of humility and obedience to that UNITY for which the SAVIOUR offered HIS intensest prayer* in the moments of that, HIS Agony, which we shall soon be called upon to commemorate: and,

Believe me, my dear Flock,
Ever your faithful Brother and Pastor
in CHRIST,

ALEX^R. WATSON.

Ash-Wednesday, 1843.

* John xvii. 22-23.

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